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Why Stagnation?

PAUL M. SWEEZY

Reflections of Salvadoran Women

ASSOCIATION OF SALVADORAN WOMEN

The Ideology of the Nicaraguan Revolution

HARRY E. VANDEN

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

MR Press is pleased to announce its first co-publishing venture with an African publishing house, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, by David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, two journalists turned historian with many years of experience covering events in southern Africa, and containing a Foreword by Robert Mugabe, the Prime Minister of the independent republic of Zimbabwe. The 378-page paperback book was edited and produced by the Zimbabwe Publishing House in Zimbabwe. Official publication date in the United States is June 18th, but the book is already in stock and can be ordered by mail immediately. The price is $8.95 plus $1.00 for postage and handling. In his Foreword, Robert Mugabe writes: "To date, the only work which, in some detail, describes and portrays the resistance of the African people to white settlement and subsequent settler rule is *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia (1896-7)*, by Terence Ranger [Professor of African Studies at the University of Manchester]. Where Terence Ranger studies the causes and describes the organization and mode of struggle of the first national War of Resistance or first Chimurenga of 1896-7, David Martin and Phyllis Johnson carry the story further by dwelling principally on the second War of Resistance or the second Chimurenga." In turn Professor Ranger, reviewing the book in the (London) *Observer*, writes: "Anyone who wants to know where Zimbabwe's new rulers have come from and how and why they reached power will have to read this book." As noted above, this is MR Press's first co-publishing venture with an African publishing house, but we hope it will not be the last.

The table on p. 41 of Fred Magdoff's article "Pros and Cons of Agricultural Mechanization in the Third World" in the May issue has one of its columns headed with "output" and "input" on separate lines but with no indication of the relation between the two. The correct heading should have been a ratio with output as the numerator and input as the denominator.

(continued on inside back cover)

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WHY STAGNATION?

By Paul M. Sweezy

The question "Why Stagnation?" has a rather special significance for me. I started my graduate work in economics exactly 50 years ago this year. The cyclical downturn which began in 1929 was nearing the bottom. Unemployment in that year, according to government figures, was 23.6 percent of the labor force, and it reached its high point in 1933 at 24.9 percent. It remained in the double-digit range throughout the decade. Still, a recovery began in 1933, and it turned out to be the longest on record up to that time. Even at the top in 1937, however, the unemployment rate was still 14.3 percent, and it jumped up by the end of the year. That also happens to be the year I got my Ph. D. Can you imagine a set of circumstances better calculated to impress upon a young economist the idea that the fundamental economic problem was not cyclical ups and downs but secular stagnation?

In the wake of the sharp recession of 1937, a debate over the causes of stagnation began to spread in the economics profession. The two most prominent protagonists were Alvin Hansen and Joseph Schumpeter, Harvard's top economists of the 1930s. Hansen's position was best summed up in his 1938 book *Full Recovery or Stagnation?*, Schumpeter's in the last chapter of his two-volume 1939 treatise on *Business Cycles*.

This is a reconstruction from notes of a talk given to the Harvard Economics Club on March 22, 1982.

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Schumpeter labeled Hansen's theory the "theory of vanishing investment opportunities," and it is an apt characterization. According to this theory, the modern developed capitalist economy has an enormous capacity to save, both because of its corporate structure and because of the very unequal distribution of personal income. But if adequate profitable investment opportunities are lacking, this saving potential translates not into real capital formation and sustained growth but into lowered income, mass unemployment, and chronic depression, a condition summed up in the term stagnation. (The framework of this analysis was of course derived directly from Keynes's *General Theory* which was published in 1936, and of which Hansen was the best known interpreter and champion on this side of the Atlantic.)

To complete the theory, what was needed was an explanation of why there should be such a dearth of investment opportunities in the 1930s as compared to earlier times. Hansen's attempt to fill this gap ran in terms of what he considered to be certain irreversible historical changes which had begun to build up in earlier decades and finally came to dominate the scene after what Schumpeter called the "world crisis" beginning in 1929. To oversimplify somewhat, these changes, according to Hansen, were (1) the end of geographical expansion, sometimes put in terms of the "closing of the frontier" but interpreted by Hansen in a wider global sense; (2) a decline in the rate of population growth; and (3) a tendency on the part of new technologies to be less capital-using than in earlier stages of capitalist development. In Hansen's view, all these changes operated to restrict the demand for new capital investment and in this way transformed the system's great capacity to save into a stagnation-producing force rather than an engine of rapid growth.

Hansen's critics, including Schumpeter, could see little merit in this theory. Not that they denied the necessity for healthy capital formation to sustain growth and high employment: they just couldn't accept the argument that the changes Hansen pointed to were real, or if they were real that they would necessarily entail a weakening of the demand for new investment. The end of geographical expansion in the United States came in the late nineteenth century: Why should it begin to have such adverse economic effects three or four decades later? Population

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growth doesn't necessarily stimulate investment: it can just as well mean more unemployment, doubling up in housing, a lower standard of living. And the alleged nature and effect of changes in technological innovation were unproved and, according to the critics, unprovable.

Opposed to Hansen's theory, Schumpeter put forward another one which he posed in a somewhat different way. Instead of asking what caused the stagnation of the 1930s, he asked why the cyclical upswing which began in 1933 came to an end so far short of what he and others had always assumed to be the "normal" situation at the end of the prosperity phase of the cycle—full employment, rising prices, tight credit, etc. Some of you will remember that Schumpeter classified economic cycles into three types, each named after an earlier investigator of these phenomena: "Kitchins" (very short, basically inventory cycles); "Juglars" (what most writers think of as *the* business cycle); and "Kondratieffs" (a supposed cycle of some 50 years duration, the reality of which Schumpeter believed in). The experience of the 1930s he described as "the disappointing Juglar." Why?

Rejecting the Hansen theory of vanishing investment opportunities, Schumpeter blamed the anti-business climate of the period—a climate, incidentally, which he thought was an inevitable by-product of capitalist development. In a sense this might be called the "New Deal theory of stagnation," and in one form or another it was shared by most political conservatives. But Schumpeter, as was his wont, gave it a special twist: for him the heart of the matter was not so much the content of New Deal legislation—which he recognized as being compatible with the normal functioning of capitalism—as the personnel who administered the legislation and what he considered the anti-business spirit in which they acted. These, he believed, had a dampening, repressive effect on entrepreneurs' confidence and optimism, blighting their hopes for the future and inhibiting their investment activities in the present.

It was of course no accident that this debate over stagnation flourished in the aftermath of the sharp cyclical decline of 1937–38. Prior to that it seemed reasonable to hope that the long upswing that began in 1933 would continue to capacity production and full employment. The downturn therefore came

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as a rude shock. With the unemployment rate jumping up to 19 percent in 1938 and remaining over 17 percent in 1939, the grim reality of stagnation could no longer be denied. Hansen's 1938 book and Schumpeter's response of the next year were only the highlights of what gave every sign of becoming one of the classic controversies in the history of economic thought. Nor was it only economists who were involved: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, his once hopeful New Deal blighted by a new and unexpected economic calamity, appointed a high-level Temporary National Economic Committee to find out what went wrong and what could be done about it. But before the TNEC could even begin to report its (ultimately very meager) findings, the Second World War came along. Overnight the whole subject of stagnation dropped out of sight, never to be revived.

After the war, in 1952, one serious and important study of the subject was published in England, *Maturity and Stagnation in American Capitalism*, by Josef Steindl, an Austrian refugee who had spent the war years at the Oxford Institute of Statistics. But it was ignored by the economics profession, and the long period of postwar capitalist expansion which was under way by the time the book appeared seemed to have relegated the whole "problematic" of stagnation to the realm of historical curiosities.

More recent events, however, have shown that the burial of stagnation was, to say the least, premature. I hardly need to remind you that by the mid-1970s the problem was back again, this time with a new twist reflected in a new name, "stagflation." Just when it reappeared could be the subject of debate. Perhaps it was the late 1950s, with the Vietnam war acting as a temporary postponing factor. Perhaps it was the early 1970s, following the Penn-Central credit crunch and Nixon's formal abandonment of the gold standard and brief experiment with wage and price controls. Or perhaps the real return of stagnation should be dated from the recession of 1974–75. In any case the second half of the 1970s displayed the phenomenon in its new form of stagflation for all to see. And there can be little doubt that it has been getting worse since then, as two sets of facts eloquently testify. First, unemployment in the advanced capitalist world (24 OECD countries) is expected to reach 30 million this year, a rate of around 10 percent of the total labor force (with figures

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much higher of course for women, young people, and minorities). Second, in the United States there have been two recessions in successive years, with the present one quite possibly degenerating into a full-scale depression. (This is not to suggest that those who are expecting or predicting an upturn in the near future are necessarily wrong. There was a brief upturn in 1930 and of course the long recovery already alluded to from 1933 to 1937: indeed ups and downs around the trend, which itself may be up or down, are always not only possible but inevitable.)

I do not pretend to keep up with the latest economic literature as it appears, but it is my impression that the economics profession has not yet begun to resume the debate over stagnation which was so abruptly interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War. I have the feeling that if you ask an economist how we got into the mess we are in, he or she, while not denying that it is indeed a mess, will reply by giving advice as to how to get out of it but will not have anything very enlightening to say about how we got into it. Leonard Silk, the well-informed, middle-of-the-road economics editor of the *New York Times* is a good example. In many of his columns lately he has been emphasizing the precariousness of the present economic situation, criticizing the policies of the Reagan administration and suggesting ways to do better. In one such column in the "Business" section of the Sunday paper for March 14th he even included a considerable amount of background material, centering on five charts dating to 1965, showing that the roots of the problem go back a long way. The headline on the piece is interesting: "What's Happening Is Not a Depression. It's a Chronic State of Unemployment and Industrial Slack. The Government Caused It." At first glance this might seem to be both a description of stagnation and an explanation of it. But if you read the article, you won't find much in the way of explanation. This is hardly surprising since there have been five different administrations since 1965 with a variety of ideologies and policies, and it would seem *a priori* rather unlikely that one would be able to distill out of the whole experience an entity deserving the name "the" government on which to place the blame. Nor does Leonard Silk really try to do so. One rather suspects that some harried editor wrote the headline without reading the article too carefully.

So we still have the question: "Why Stagnation?" It was

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raised and then dropped without any satisfactory answer in the 1930s. Reality is now posing it again. I think it is time to accept the challenge and resume the search for an answer.

I think we will do well if we begin where Hansen began in the 1930s. The structure of the economy in both its corporate and its individual dimensions is basically the same as it was a half century ago. Its saving potential is still enormous, and what changes have taken place have tended to make it greater rather than smaller in the intervening period. Corporate concentration has increased, and the distribution of individual incomes remains highly unequal. Moreover, changes in the tax structure have been more and more favorable to the corporations and the rich. As always under such conditions, a strong and sustained investment performance is needed to prevent the economy from falling into stagnation. And that is precisely what has been missing for a long time now, and especially in the last few years. So the immediate cause of stagnation is the same now as it was in the 1930s—a strong propensity to save and a weak propensity to invest.

Let me digress for a moment to point out that the fact that the overall performance of the economy in recent years has not been much worse than it actually has been, or as bad as it was in the 1930s, is largely owing to three causes: (1) the much greater role of government spending and government deficits; (2) the enormous growth of consumer debt, including residential mortgage debt, especially during the 1970s; and (3) the ballooning of the financial sector of the economy which, apart from the growth of debt as such, includes an explosion of all kinds of speculation, old and new, which in turn generates more than a mere trickle-down of purchasing power into the "real" economy, mostly in the form of increased demand for luxury goods. These are important forces counteracting stagnation as long as they last, but there is always the danger that if carried too far they will erupt in an old-fashioned panic of a kind we haven't seen since the 1929–33 period.

So at bottom we are back where the debate of the 1930s left off: Why is the incentive to invest so weak? Hansen's answers are, I think, a good deal less, not more, persuasive today than they were when he first advanced them. And surely no one can follow the Schumpeter line of blaming anti-business policies for dis-

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couraging capitalists from investing in the years since the Second World War, least of all with an administration in power like the one we now have in Washington. We must look elsewhere.

I suggest that the answer is to be found in analyzing the long period—25 years or so—which followed the Second World War, during which we did *not* have a problem of stagnation. In fact during that time the incentive to invest was strong and sustained, and the growth record of the economy was perhaps the best for any comparable period in the history of capitalism. Why?

The reason, I think, is that the war altered the givens of the world economic situation in ways that enormously strengthened the incentive to invest. I list in very summary form the main factors: (1) the need to make good wartime damage; (2) the existence of a vast potential demand for goods and services the production of which had been eliminated or greatly reduced during the war (houses, automobiles, appliances, etc.); a huge pool of purchasing power accumulated during the war by firms and individuals which could be used to transform potential demand into effective demand; (3) the establishment of U.S. global hegemony as a result of the war: the U.S. dollar became the basis of the international monetary system, prewar trade and currency blocs were dismantled, and the conditions for relatively free capital movements were created—all of which served to fuel an enormous expansion of international trade; (4) civilian spinoffs from military technology, especially electronics and jet planes; and (5) the building up by the United States of a huge peacetime armaments industry, spurred on by major regional wars in Korea and Indochina. Very important but often overlooked is the fact that these changes were in due course reflected in a fundamental change in the business climate. The pessimism and caution left over from the 1930s were not dissipated immediately, but when it became clear that the postwar boom had much deeper roots than merely repairing the damages and losses of the war itself, the mood changed into one of long-term optimism. A great investment boom in all the essential industries of a modern capitalist society was triggered: steel, autos, energy, ship-building, heavy chemicals, and many more. Capacity was built up rapidly in all the leading capitalist countries and in a few of the more advanced countries of the Third World like Mexico, Brazil, India, and South Korea.

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In tracing the causes of the re-emergence of stagnation in the 1970s, the crucial point to keep in mind is that every one of the forces which powered the long postwar expansion was, and was bound to be, self-limiting. This indeed is part of the very nature of investment: it not only responds to a demand, it also satisfies the demand. Wartime damage was repaired. Demand deferred during the war was satisfied. The process of building up new industries (including a peacetime arms industry) requires a lot more investment than maintaining them. Expanding industrial capacity always ends up by creating *over*capacity.

To put the point differently: a strong incentive to invest produces a burst of investment which in turn undermines the incentive to invest. This is the secret of the long postwar boom and of the return of stagnation in the 1970s. As the boom began to peter out, stagnation was fought off for some years by more and more debt creation, both national and international, more and more frantic speculation, more and more inflation. By now these palliatives have become more harmful than helpful, and to the problem of stagnation has been added that of a rapidly deteriorating financial situation.

Does this mean that I am arguing or implying that stagnation has become a permanent state of affairs? Not at all. Some people — I think it would be fair to include Hansen in this category — thought that the stagnation of the 1930s was here to stay and that it could be overcome only by basic changes in the structure of the advanced capitalist economies. But, as experience demonstrated, they were wrong, and a similar argument today could also prove wrong. I do not myself believe that a new war could have the same consequences as it did last time (or as it did on a lesser scale after the First World War). If a new war were big enough to have a major impact on the economy, it would probably become a nuclear war, after which there might be little left to rebuild. But no one can say for sure that there will never be other new powerful stimuli to investment, such, for example, as were provided by the industrial revolution, the railroad, and the automobile in earlier times. What one can say, I think, is that nothing like that is visible on the horizon now. For those who understand this, the lesson is clear enough: rather than wait around for a miracle (or an irretrievable disaster), it is high time to dedicate our thoughts and energies to replacing the

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present economic system with one which operates to satisfy human needs and not as a mere by-product of the presence or absence of investment opportunities attractive to a relative handful of socially irresponsible capitalists.

Let me close with a few remarks about the relevance of the foregoing analysis to a subject to which economists have been devoting increasing attention in the last few years, i.e., whether or not the history of capitalism has been characterized by a long cycle of some fifty years' duration (what Schumpeter called the Kondratieff cycle). First, we should be clear that the issue here is not whether capitalist development takes place in an uneven fashion with periods of rapid expansion being succeeded by periods of slow (or even no) expansion and vice versa—what have often been referred to as long waves. The empirical existence of long waves in this sense is undeniable, and the ingenuity of statisticians operating with an almost infinite variety of possible statistical sources can be counted on to make out a case for a time sequence of accelerated and retarded growth rates compatible with the existence of an underlying cyclical mechanism.

But *compatibility* with the existence of a cyclical mechanism is entirely different from *proof* of the existence of such a mechanism. The reason for our acceptance of the idea that relatively short cycles exist (i.e., cycles of less than ten years' duration, Schumpeter's Kitchin and Juglar cycles) is that the mechanisms at work can be elucidated analytically as well as verified empirically. The important point is to be able to demonstrate that the two basic phases of the cycle, expansion and contraction, can each be shown to contain the seeds of its opposite. This principle lies at the core of all modern business-cycle theories. To quote what was long a standard textbook on the subject:

> Business cycles consist of recurring alternations of expansion and contraction in aggregate economic activity. . . . The economy seems to be incapable of remaining on an even keel, and periods of expanding activity always and all too soon give way to declining production and employment. Further, and this is the essence of the problem, each upswing or downswing is self-reinforcing. It feeds on itself and creates further movement in the same direction; once begun, it persists in a given direction until forces accumulate to reverse the direction. (Robert A. Gordon, *Business Fluctuations*, New York, 1952, p. 214)

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The key phrase is "until forces accumulate to reverse the direction." This occurs in both the expansion and the contraction phases of the normal business cycle, but the symmetry breaks down when it comes to long waves. As we have already noted in the case of the long expansion following the Second World War, the reversal does indeed take place: it is the nature of an investment boom to exhaust itself. But it is equally clear from the experiences of the 1930s and the 1970s that the stagnation phase of a long wave does not generate any "forces of reversal." If and when such forces do emerge, they originate not in the internal logic of the economy but in the larger historical context within which the economy functions. It was the Second World War that brought the stagnation of the 1930s to an end. We still do not know what will bring the stagnation of the 1970s and 1980s to an end—or what kind of an end it will be.

DEPRESSION AND EXALTATION

The true, or what may be called the normal, crises, depressions, and exaltations in the business world are not the result of accidents, such as the failure of a crop. They come in the regular course of business. The depression and the exaltation are in a measure bound together. In the recent past, since depression and exaltation have been normal features of the situation, every strongly marked period of exaltation (prosperity) has had its attendant period of depression; although it does not seem to follow in the nature of things that a wave of depression necessarily has its attendant reaction in the way of a period of business exaltation.

Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904), p. 183

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PARTICIPATION OF LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS:

REFLECTIONS OF SALVADORAN WOMEN

BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SALVADORAN WOMEN

Traditionally the mode of development of the Latin American economies has been structured around the production of raw materials and oriented toward satisfying the demands of the foreign market and the interests of the bourgeoisie. Concomitant with this was high concentration of income, large foreign debt, inflation, and military dictatorship. Permanent economic, political, and social crisis is therefore characteristic of the great majority of the countries of the continent; and in its wake, poverty, super-exploitation, and repression.

Latin American women, who face double oppression, have not been exempt from this dramatic reality. Although the principal source of our subjection is capitalism, even before its advent feudal society had already assigned a subordinate role to women. The oppression of women is a suffocating cultural heritage, and, as Simone de Beauvoir has pointed out, "One is not born, but rather learns to be, a woman." We Latin American women have undoubtedly been learning: learning *not* to be

This is a translation of a paper presented by a representative of AMES (Association of Salvadoran Women) at the First Latin American Research Seminar on Women, in San José, Costa Rica, in November 1981. AMES is an affiliate of the FDR (Democratic Revolutionary Front), the coalition of parties and popular organizations which, together with the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) leads the struggle for national liberation in El Salvador. The translation is by Bobbye Ortiz.

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accomplices of the myth of Cinderella, who waited for Prince Charming to free her from misery and convert her into the happy mother of numerous little princes; learning to take to the streets to fight for the elimination of poverty; learning to be active protagonists in the forging of our social destiny.

To be a member of the working class is not the same as being a member of the upper class; to be a North American or a European is not the same as being a Chilean or a Salvadoran. We are all, to some degree, exploited and we all carry the burden of our patriarchal heritage, but unquestionably our class interests transcend those of gender. What has a Domitila, a working-class woman of the Bolivian mines, to do with the wife of Abdul Gutiérrez, the bloody colonel of the Christian Democratic military junta of El Salvador? For women of the low-income sectors, joining the labor force is linked with a survival strategy similar to that of men of the same class and obeying the same necessities. However, for the women of the middle and higher strata, incorporation into production is determined by the number and age of their children, by their level of education, by the gap between the family wage and their consumer expectations.

There are also differences arising from the degree of development of a region, or from the pattern of urban and rural zones. Our struggle as Latin American women is different from that of women in developed countries. Like us, the latter play a fundamental role as reproducers of labor power and ideology, but *our* problematic arises fundamentally from the economic, political, and cultural exploitation of our people. Our struggle is, thus, not only for immediate demands; nor is it an individual one or against men. We seek the liberation of our countries from imperialism, dictatorship, and the local bourgeoisie—although we work simultaneously around the question of the specific condition of women and our oppression within the capitalist and patriarchal system.

While in the developed countries there is a struggle for contraception and abortion, in Latin America we must also fight against forced sterilization and certain birth-control projects which some governments have agreed to under pressure from the United States. For us women, it is not a

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question of demanding collective services such as daycare centers or laundries, but rather of demanding general community services such as water, light, housing, and health care.

For Latin American women "the double day" has another dimension which converts "wages for housework" into a remote goal; our short-term goals are related to employment and job opportunities, to the exploitation of the principal wage-earner, and the impossibility of survival with starvation wages. It makes no sense to struggle against the consumerism of one part of society if we are faced with poverty and the impossibility of consuming by the other part, which constitutes the majority of the people.

In sum we are fighting for a thoroughgoing change which will include women in the production process, which will free both women and men from exploitation and poverty. At the same time the search for solutions to the specific problems of women must not be neglected.

Invisible Work

Man's work in capitalist society is carried out at the cost of women's work within the home, which saves him the extra hours required for the reproduction of his labor power; hence the higher level of masculine skill and the male monopoly of political power. Both factors are characteristic of class society, and are due to an enormous amount of invisible labor done by women and appropriated by men through the mechanism of the family as an economic unit.

The family has been the foundation stone of all class societies and has given stability to the system based on private property. The family nucleus is the economic and legal formation through which the dominant classes put at their service and confiscate the labor of the female population. The toil of the male laborer is not sufficient to reproduce his labor power; another phase of production is required, namely, domestic labor. Carried out by women, it produces goods and services: laundered, ironed, and mended clothing; meals; a tidy house; and children educated in accordance with the requirements laid down for the new generation of workers.

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If formerly the capitalists obtained a given amount of surplus value from the male worker, the principal family wage-earner, with the growing incorporation of women into the paid labor force they obtain a further benefit. In addition to the male workers, who are responsible for family subsistence, the women also work (and are paid lower wages), thus making up the deficit of income necessary to survival of the family unit. It is vitally important for the reproduction of class society that we women not exhaust our strength in social production, but rather that we conserve our energy for the private economic nucleus. Thus women, because of this contradiction between the two kinds of labor we perform, are obliged to accept unskilled jobs which leave us with a reservoir of energy for domestic tasks.

In other words, the fundamental aspect of women's problem, exploitation, is the direct result of capitalist relations of production. However, there exists another dimension, *oppression,* which is useful to the system, and whose cultural and social roots go back to the dawn of civilization: female subordination to the male and the division of labor (along gender lines), which predate capitalist society. They are found in most societies known to the history of humanity. So we can conclude that the problem of women is a fundamental social and cultural reality.

In the nineteenth century socialist thinkers assumed that the cause of women was identical with the cause of the working class. Although these thinkers acknowledged that women's subordination predated capitalism, they thought that the abolition of that social system would simultaneously abolish both workers' exploitation and commercialized human relations, freeing women from economic dependence on men and consequently from subordination. However, we think that to achieve our total emancipation such a change is a necessary but not sufficient condition.

It is indispensable that we also transform the ideological superstructures that perpetuate a male-female relationship based on the equation domination-subjection and reproduced fundamentally in the family. The family nucleus is the locus where models and values useful to the system are transmitted through the sexual division of labor; on the legal level, through

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inheritance through the male line; on the economic level, as a unit of production and consumption and as a mediator between needs and resources; and on the social plane, by relegating women to the "private" domestic sphere and hampering our social and political participation.

Inasmuch as our specific situation of oppression and subordination is a centuries-old state of affairs which by now we have internalized, it can be said that we women share a specific condition. And it is in function of this specificity that we have been marginalized from history and the values inherent in our subordinate role have been exalted. We must acknowledge that we have internalized these values which now form part of our personalities.

We are conscious of the fact that the alleged separation between the "private" and the "public" is merely a sophism. The private is directly political because patriarchal ideology permeates the individual lives of men and women. It is important to recognize the link between the two areas and understand that although women will not be liberated without a change in society, it is equally true that there can be no genuine social transformation without women's emancipation.

To the extent to which we women are kept isolated and confined to the domestic sphere we will continue to accept our role, to accept the postulate that, due to biological differences, we are weak beings – docile, inferior to men, but also beautiful and noble – to whom have been assigned the important roles of wife and mother.

Changes That Don't Change Anything

There is a daily growing contingent of women who question our passive role, the defense of the status quo, and our being distanced from political activity on our continent; there is a daily growing number of women who question why we work as much as 80 hours a week on the "double shift" which prevents us from participating in the social process and in decision-making.

In the light of this situation, many ruling regimes promulgate paternalistic legislation which establishes "equality before the law," even "no sex discrimination," including certain measures in favor of mothers and children. These are

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formal measures which do not affect the daily reality of the great majority of people. Such is the case with education, for example, access to which is limited for the majority of both men and women of the lower classes, but especially women. Six out of ten Salvadorans are illiterate; well over half are women. In the cities twice as many women as men are illiterate.

In order to avert the threat of a genuine change in the specific role of women and our active participation in the liberation processes which would follow upon a massive increase of female consciousness, many governments have promoted modernist or developmental solutions. They point to the betterment of general living conditions in capitalist countries and to the introduction of new technology; they claim that this economic prosperity offers women the possibility of participating in the labor market and, consequently, of having "access to and participation in social life."

These seductive conceptions of women's liberation are almost always associated with conservative or reformist values, which do not conduce to effective changes in social relations. They provide a basis for exalting the role of women within the family as an institution which creates consensus and continuity of a culture, and which is an outgrowth of the capitalist system macho, repressive, and based on the commercialization of human relations.

We think that the integration of women into capitalist society, the offer of a bigger piece of the pie, does not constitute liberation. Nobody can be free in a system that destroys everything human in both men and women. Nor can our problem be solved by the "insertion" (the very word implies passivity) of women into such a system, without our full participation as subject, not object, and without full awareness of the process of change. To postulate our insertion into development, without determining what kind of development, resolves nothing.

First Steps Toward Liberation

The struggle of Latin American women to transcend the domestic takes place on several levels. It begins with middle- and high-income women who in part delegate their domestic

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tasks to other women; some of the privileged women fulfill their social vocation through works of charity, some are political militants who focus on the structural roots of the system.

The condition of the *mujer del pueblo* [literally, woman of the people] on our continent during the last decade has been affected in two different ways. In terms of repression, thousands of women have been harassed and tortured, and have disappeared or been assassinated by the dictatorships. We have also been affected in our specific roles as mother, wife, or daughter of an unemployed, persecuted, or assassinated man. We have had to face the sudden destruction of our families and the need to find a way to manage without our *compañeros*, who frequently had been the only wage-earners in the household.

Then, as a result of the unpopular economic policies of the dictatorships, we women began to organize in *frentes*—of shantytown dwellers and housewives affected by economic, social, and political repression; of factory workers, peasants, and professionals who organized to defend the gains won through long years of struggle. The *frentista* format has become one of the principal responses utilized by Latin American women for dealing with specific demands. Women's mobilizations in defense of, and in solidarity with, the struggles of men have grown from day to day, as a frequent expression of mass participation helping to lay bare certain prevailing contradictions and exposing the true nature of military regimes. Conceived within a liberal context and subject to penetration by bourgeois ideology, the defense of women's traditional role is the precondition of women's mobilization: it is not easy for the state to repress those who, as mothers, wives, daughters, confront it in the very roles which constitute the pillar and foundation of domination.

When the private, domestic realm is altered from the outside, Latin American women come out of their homes and take to the streets. In strikes of miners, industrial workers, and building workers, women have pounded at the doors of ministries and parliaments. They have pressured the authorities and the employers to demand wage increases or jobs for their male family members, or their release from prison.

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That is to say, their demands are not their own, but are, rather, familial. Responding to moments of crisis and deterioration of living conditions, women participate massively; as the foundation stone of the home, they defend their families; as the ones who gave life to their children, they demand that their lives be respected.

Historically, however, both the strength and weakness of such movements have resided in their spontaneity. Arising as support groups for male struggles, many of these groups dissolve when the conflicts that gave rise to them are ended; when husbands, fathers, sons return to center stage, we women retreat to our homes, leaving to the men, once again, the sphere of public activity. Perhaps that is why in Latin American history threats to traditional roles have frequently been converted into factors of women's mobilization. However, many of us, as a result of this experience, have recognized the implications of this dynamic, which opens up a terrain bordering on the political and gives to us the objective possibilities of losing the "fear of power," of transcending our traditional condition, of beginning to open up our political space.

The Difficult Task of Being Members of an Organized Movement

If men have, for centuries, devoted themselves to political work and have fulfilled themselves in it, it is because they have always had the support of one or several women who have provided them with children, with affection, with domestic services; to these women are diverted all psychological tensions, thereby freeing men from the small and large problems of domestic life.

We women, on the other hand, do not have such support systems available to us, and in order to utilize our intellectual potential we must organize ourselves in such a way that the private sphere does not interfere with our specific political work. It is indeed dramatic to organize ourselves physically and psychologically to exercise this role without experiencing guilt vis-à-vis the "neglected" roles of mother and wife which relegate us to the domestic sphere.

For a woman to be active in sociopolitical organizations

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implies the assumption of a definitive commitment, a commitment which, she feels, will have repercussions on her activities as woman, wife, mother, and in some cases, as paid worker. This situation is aggravated by the fact that until now it has not appeared that men have the intention of truly assuming some of the responsibility which for centuries has been delegated to women. It is not easy for men, even with good intentions, to raise their consciousness concerning the privileges conveyed by masculinity and to relinquish their role as the star members of the cast, becoming instead comrades who share daily life and struggle.

Consequently, for those of us who have decided to make a leap onto the stage of history and to become organized political women, protagonists of social and political transformations, the task as we see it is not an easy one.

The parties and movements of the democratic left have, in general, not dealt with the problems of women with the same consistency with which they confront other social problems. Their pronouncements in this regard are limited to the realm of class struggle and thus appear to be detached from political discourse; they do not make reference to the specific condition of women or to our integration in the struggle as a key factor in the liberation of our societies.

This omission implicitly assumes that feminism and socialism are opposed to each other. Women's liberation is not presented in terms of the liberation of the oppressed. The resolution of our struggle is, for the moment, conceived of as technical and private, becoming collective and social only after the exploited sectors have won their liberation, that is to say, in some distant and unpredictable future.

In other words, the failure to integrate the female problematic into the broad political project has, until now, left a large vacuum: a change in the relations of production is advocated, but not in the relations of reproduction; society is to be overturned economically and ideologically, but nothing is said of changes in the family, which is the sphere not only of consumption but also of reproduction of labor power, as well as the strategic locale for the transmission of ideology.

Will the people's organizations be capable of focusing on the specifics of daily life, or will they leave this to the mercy of

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the dominant ideology? Will they be capable of breaking the female tradition of conservatism and fear, transforming women on a mass scale into organized political activists? Indicative of the political and ideological maturity of an organization is its analysis and proposals vis-à-vis the present role of women as reproducers of an ideology of domination, and therefore of the perpetuation of a social system.

Participation of Women in the Process of National Liberation

We Salvadoran women have become aware of our situation; we understand that our revolution for [national] liberation will provide the fundamental solution for our problems. We Salvadoran women have participated, in this century, in all the political movements against domination by the oligarchy, but in the last two decades our participation has grown by leaps and bounds. In the 1970s we adopted a clear revolutionary strategy.

In 1922 there was a demonstration of women in mourning, demanding the release of their imprisoned family members. It was repressed by the regime in power, with seven *compañeras* assassinated. Women also played a part in the heroic insurrection of 1932, which left 30,000 workers and peasants murdered. We also played an active role in the general sit-down strike in 1944, which succeeded in removing General Martínez from power.

A women's organization remembered with respect in El Salvador is the *Fraternidad de Mujeres,* which, in 1960, organized spirited struggles and, together with other organizations belonging to the National Front of Civic Orientation, removed Colonel Lemus from power. (At that time the level of consciousness was not what it is today, and a new tyrant took over.)

A national strike movement known as the "Strike of Steel, Inc.," involving 35,000 workers, took place in 1967. Women workers took part in it massively and militantly. There were also two big national strikes of teachers, the majority of whom were women. These strikers took to the streets in a broad struggle around union and political issues and against the military dictatorship, which had violently repressed these

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movements. The firm revolutionary spirit of women began to be forged in those struggles.

The revolutionary student movement also provided the setting for the combativity and revolutionary consciousness of many of our heroic *compañeras* who are still struggling today, and for many others who have fallen in combat against the military dictatorship.

The political-military organizations that are currently offering a new alternative for people's struggle, and which led our people toward our present level of development, arose early in the seventies. At the beginning, women's participation was minimal, and was limited primarily to students and teachers. But with the advent of revolutionary peasant-workers' organizations, peasant women have also joined the struggle in large numbers. Children are also participating, together with their parents, since they also experience exploitation and repression.

In the mid-1970s the mass struggle reached new, qualitatively higher levels of struggle; there were also qualitative leaps in respect to combativity, and there was an acceleration in the process of self-defense in mass political actions. Salvadoran women are participating in diverse and exemplary ways in tasks of agitation, propaganda, and organization, as well as in the military struggle of our people.

In 1977 organizations arose, composed primarily of women, which demanded the freedom of the many captured and disappeared prisoners taken by the government. The Committee for the Freedom of Prisoners and the Disappeared and the Committee of Disappeared Prisoners carried on spirited struggles – hunger strikes, demonstrations, appeals to international organizations for the freeing of their family members. At the same time the class struggle, which had been characterized by legalistic thinking since 1967, underwent a transformation. With the advent of the revolutionary trade union movement, women workers also joined the struggle.

In 1978 the first steps were taken toward forming the organization that was to become AMES (the Association of Salvadoran Women) as a way of incorporating into political life those sectors of women (housewives, professionals, teachers,

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secretaries, shantytown dwellers, students, etc.) who, because of their special circumstances, had not yet joined the people's struggle. The year 1978 saw also the organizing of market and street vendors. AUTRAMES (the Association of Market Vendors and Workers) and the Luz Dílian Arévalo Coordinating Committee of Market Vendors have led spirited struggles, occupying markets and demonstrating to better their working and living conditions.

Salvadoran women have also been joining mass organizations which today form part of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). Concurrently women have been joining the political-military organizations and armed units of the people. Thousands of women fight with weapons in hand in the militia, the guerrilla forces, and the popular army of liberation, participating both at the rank-and-file level and in the leadership.

Our revolutionary struggle is a political and military war of the entire people against a minority supported by U.S. imperialism. Salvadoran women constitute half the population of our country, and we are participating in this effort on a massive scale. There is no area of struggle today where we are not present. This is an indication of the profundity of the revolutionary struggle in our country, and the way in which women participate demonstrates the high revolutionary level of our liberation process.

For centuries the women of our country have been suffering double oppression and exploitation. Today we are fighting as part of a people who have taken up arms to end oligarchic and imperialist domination. Our presence is felt, from the members of AMES to the highest leadership levels of the FDR. In our country, as in Nicaragua, new procedures are being developed not only in revolutionary organization and leadership, but also in the transformation of human relations. Strategies, speeches, guidelines—these are no longer the prerogatives of men. And they too are aware of the need for, and accept being participants in, an educational process in that respect, a process that will result in human relations that are morally binding on everyone.

We think that in a revolutionary organization there can be no contradictions between professed ideas and behavior. There

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must be consistency between the choices made, the values affirmed, and daily life—with no exceptions, no ambiguity.

No real change in society is ever brought about painlessly, nor will the problem of women's organized participation be resolved by the insertion of stipulated quotas of women in the leadership. It is necessary to face seriously and self-critically the male-female relationship with all its implications and understand the gravity of our exclusion from, or relegation to a minor role in, the process of change. We constitute half of humanity and we constitute an objectively exploited and oppressed social group with enormous revolutionary potential.

Keeping clearly in mind that the struggle for women's liberation must be immersed in the struggle for the liberation of our peoples, it is also necessary to point out that we women are a group defined by our own conditions and specific demands and that we cannot wait for socialism or a change of structures to solve tomorrow the very problems that are today the source of our limitations, of our backwardness as integral human beings, as agents of change.

A woman's conscious decision to join in organized struggle implies a transition much longer and more arduous than that of men, inasmuch as we must overcome an endless number of hurdles. If we evaluate these hurdles, we see that, qualitatively speaking, a dual leap has been taken. Obviously this does not mean that we have solved our specific problems of "being a woman," nor is organized participation a panacea that will permit us to achieve our full identity. However, we think that the hallmark of revolutionary feminism is that it locates itself within a context of total transformation of society. We also know that the liberation of women requires a level of generalized collective consciousness which is the result of a development of a new ideology. And that new ideology must be the result of a project for a new structuring of society—a society without private property and without exploitation of one human being by another.

We Salvadoran women ask the peoples of the world to increase your solidarity with the people of El Salvador so as to isolate the junta and bring to a halt the nefarious efforts toward direct and massive military intervention in our country by U.S. imperialism.

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THE IDEOLOGY OF THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION

BY HARRY E. VANDEN

> We could say that we did not invent the fundamental elements of our liberation ourselves. The vanguard gathered these ideas from Sandino, from our own people, and this is what enabled us to lead the people toward their liberty.
>
> Humberto Ortega Saavedra,
> *La revolución a través de nuestra dirección nacional*

The ideas that inspired the revolution in Nicaragua had their roots in the national past, in the history of a nation that strove to free itself from foreign domination and internal despotism. *Sandinismo* became the repository of national consciousness. It represented the culmination of a long process that finally allowed the Nicaraguan people to gain an understanding of their own history. It became the ideological vehicle through which the national past was recaptured by the Nicaraguan masses.

Before *sandinismo*—and Sandino—Nicaragua was a little like Gabriel García Márquez's tragic town of Macondo. It was a place where the people could not comprehend their present reality because they had lost their sense of history. If,

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Harry Vanden teaches politics at the University of South Florida, Tampa. He is most grateful to Fred Murphy and many other *compañeros* for their help with this work, which is a condensed version of the second chapter of a book edited by Tom Walker, *Nicaragua in Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1981). This article is printed with the permission of Praeger. Please see the original chapter for full footnoting.

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as García Márquez seems to believe, a consciousness of history is necessary for a society's survival and autonomous development, Nicaraguans gained such a consciousness only through more than 50 years of *sandinista* struggle. And even during the struggle the reactionary forces "always denied the people the knowledge of their own history."[1]

The beginning of a modern national consciousness that included the Indian and mestizo masses only emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century in Nicaragua, more than a generation after the pro-slavery adventurer William Walker carried out the first in a long series of U.S. interventions in national affairs. Only then did a few intellectuals begin to look toward their distant indigenous past to rediscover their nation's historic identity and thus transcend the narrow Hispanicism that had continually constrained national politics, thought, and literature.

Even the great Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío had to break with the stultifying forms of continental Spanish literature before he could discover truly Nicaraguan and Latin American literary forms, before he could develop "Modernism." As he said in *Prosas profanas* (1896), "If there is poetry in our [Latin] America, it is to be found in the old things: in Palenké and Utatlán, in the legendary Indian and refined Inca; in the great Moctezuma on his throne of gold."

Darío thus demonstrated how the most remote seeds of the struggle for national liberation and the development of a modern national consciousness resided in the indigenous struggle to resist Spanish colonization. "Our people"—*sandinista* commander Tomás Borge writes—"have tenaciously sought to recover their cultural identity and have fought for their right to be the authors of their own historical process, which has already been interrupted and truncated by imperialism innumerable times." This struggle to create a national historic consciousness and repel foreign intrusion dated from early colonial times when indigenous leaders like the *cacique* Diriangen fought to repel the Spanish invaders. Indeed, Darío's poetic sensibility enabled him to see the continuity of the struggle more clearly than most Nicaraguan politicians of his day.[2]

The modernist poets who followed Darío also contributed

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to the growth of an historic identity in Nicaragua and were, with Darío, the founders of Nicaraguan literature. They too were affected by the sociopolitical situation of Nicaragua, and were among the first to rediscover an awareness of Nicaragua's popular history. In so doing they began to disseminate the ideas that, as they found fertile ground in a people long denied an awareness of their place in history, were to contribute to the growing nationalist consciousness that was to become manifest in the struggle of Augusto C. Sandino and his Army to Defend National Sovereignty.

Some of Nicaragua's Liberal Party politicians also began to realize that the country's political structures were inadequate. Although the Liberal reform movement did not develop in Nicaragua until the late nineteenth century, it carried a vision of society similar to that of other reform movements in Mexico (under Benito Juárez) and elsewhere in Latin America.

José Santos Zelaya's Liberal Revolution of 1893 marked the beginning of the modern Liberal movement in Nicaragua. Although constrained by bourgeois liberalism, he introduced some progressive ideas and began to challenge the traditional oligarchy and the power of the Catholic Church. His successful drive to recover the Atlantic coast from British colonialism also stimulated the growth of national consciousness. Supported by elements of the national bourgeoisie, Zelaya introduced reforms that soon alarmed the Conservative Party forces and threatened the interests of U.S. capital (which was antagonistic to the growth of a vigorous, independent, national capitalist class in Nicaragua). As Zelaya faced increasing internal and external pressure, his regime degenerated into a dictatorship. In 1909 Washington forced him to resign before he could implement his plans to modernize Nicaragua.

The national bourgeoisie did not achieve the changes necessary to develop a modern nationalist capitalist system. Using various pretexts, the U.S. marines intervened in 1909 to reinstate Conservative rule and ensure the dominant position of U.S. capital. As U.S. intervention increased during the next years (the marines were again landed in 1912 to prop up the puppet regime of Adolfo Díaz, and did not leave until 1925),

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anti-interventionist sentiment grew among the Nicaraguan people. This tended to radicalize many supporters of the Liberal movement, and even prompted a few conservatives to join the many armed uprisings against U.S.-installed governments.

With the outbreak of a new liberal uprising against a conservative coup in 1925 and the U.S.-inspired re-installation of Adolfo Díaz as president, the struggle began to take on clear nationalist and anti-imperialist overtones. The marines once again intervened. It was at this point that Sandino returned from Mexico and joined the now strongly nationalist Liberal struggle. Although Sandino (a mechanic) encountered open hostility from José M. Moncada, the upper-class head of the Liberal army, he was able to arm and organize his own Liberal band and participate in the increasingly successful Liberal offensive. The Liberal struggle met with enthusiastic support from the masses, who were participating in growing numbers. However, just as the Liberal forces were in sight of a clear military victory, the United States arranged a compromise solution that was accepted by Moncada and eventually supported by all the Liberal generals save one – Sandino.

None of the bourgeois leaders supported Sandino. But the peasants, miners, artisans, workers, and Indians who had fought with him followed him to the Segovias, a remote mountainous region in the north. Their armament had been augmented a few months earlier when a group of prostitutes in the Atlantic coast town of Puerto Cabezas helped them recover 50 rifles that the U.S. marines had confiscated from other Liberal forces.

From its inception, Sandino's struggle inspired and was supported by the lower classes in Nicaragua. In contrast to the bourgeois politicians, even the humble prostitutes in Puerto Cabezas realized that the country could only be freed by the force of arms and not by self-serving compromises with the forces of imperialism. Sandino and his Army to Defend National Sovereignty were forced to rely on little more than their own ingenuity and the support of Nicaragua's lower classes. This was to become a popular national struggle *par excellence*.

Like the members of the toiling masses who joined the struggle, Sandino brought the wisdom of his life experience. His humble birth (he was the son of a *mestiza* servant girl) and

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early life in rural Nicaragua linked him inseparably to the peasants and Indians in the countryside; his experience as a mechanic and worker in a variety of foreign and domestic corporations united him with the interests of the proletariat of Latin America and the rest of the world. While working for the U.S.-owned Huasteca Petroleum Company in Tampico, Mexico, he was affected by the nationalist radicalism of the Mexican Revolution and soon "began to identify himself with a broad nationality embracing all Americans of Iberian and Indian descent."[3]

During his years in Mexico, Sandino witnessed first-hand the militant oil workers' struggles in Tampico. He was exposed to the radical notions of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), to militant anarchism and to Marxist internationalism. Many of these ideas—along with his ardent Nicaraguan and Latin American nationalism—would be manifest in his later thought and writing. In one of his first manifestos (*Manifiesto político*, July 1, 1927), Sandino wrote that he was Nicaraguan and proud to be of Indian parentage.

> I am a worker from the city, an artisan as they say in my country. But my ideal is to be found on the broad horizon of internationalism, in the right to be free and demand justice. . . . That I am a plebeian, the oligarchs (that is, the swamp rats) will say. No matter—my greatest honor is to arise from among the oppressed who are the soul and nerve of the race, from those of us who have been left behind to live at the mercy of the shameless assassins who helped to inspire the crime of high treason: the Conservatives of Nicaragua.[4]

Although a Nicaraguan above all, Sandino realized that Nicaragua's struggle was part of a larger movement: "At the present historical moment our struggle is national and racial; it will become international as the colonial and semi-colonial peoples unite with the peoples of the imperialistic nations." Without being a Marxist, Sandino enjoyed an internationalist vision of a revolutionary nationalism that was linked to other revolutionary movements throughout the world: "It would not be strange for me and my army to find ourselves in any country of Latin America where the murderous invader had set his sights on conquest."

What had begun as the outgrowth of a liberal uprising was being transformed into a revolutionary anti-imperialist

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struggle by the most exploited classes in the country: "Only the workers and peasants," Sandino noted, "will go all the way; only their organized forces will bring about the triumph."

Sandino's growing army of miners, Indians, peasants, artisans, and workers finally forced out the marines. Their political work and the increasing sophistication and tenacity of their popular guerrilla war had gained the support of the Nicaraguan masses. The ferocity of the conflict with the marines continually forced Sandino and his followers to upgrade their military tactics and strengthen their ties with the rural masses who supported their struggle. But not even the revolutionary government of Mexico would offer Sandino and his followers any assistance. They were thus forced to become more and more self-reliant and to learn how to make optimum use of their only abundant resource—the Nicaraguan people. Rifles from the Spanish-American War, war matériel captured from the invaders, bombs made from the sardine cans the marines discarded, and a sea of machetes wielded by ever more determined *campesinos*—such were the armaments used to confront machine guns and dive bombers.[5]

This was one of the first modern examples of what a guerrilla army with mass popular support could do against a technologically superior invader, even when the latter was supported by local Quislings and the mercenary military forces at their disposal. Mobile guerrilla bands as the components of an egalitarian people's army, political as well as military organization, integrated political and military actions, close ties to the peasants, and, most importantly, popular support and involvement—such were the lessons to be learned from Sandino's people's war against imperialism. These lessons were not forgotten by the leadership of the FSLN: "In the study of *sandinismo*, in which our Commander Carlos Fonseca was teacher and example, we found the important elements to achieve our triumph."

Nor did others miss the importance of the nature of Sandino's struggle—Che Guevara understood the reasons for Sandino's success: inspirational leadership and guerrilla tactics. Colonel Alberto Bayo, the Spanish Republican guerrilla fighter who later trained Castro's original force in Mexico, was also much impressed by the military tactics of Sandino's army.

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Tragically, although Sandino's political support had enabled him to gain a military victory, he disbanded his army before he could achieve the far-reaching political and economic change he was planning at the time of his murder in 1934. At the height of his power (late 1932), he had written: "Our Army is preparing to take the reins of national power to proceed with the organization of large cooperatives of Nicaraguan workers and peasants, who will exploit our own natural resources for the benefit of the Nicaraguan family in general." He began to set up agricultural cooperatives in the Segovias, and seemed to favor the type of communal organization that his Indian ancestors had used centuries before. He had also become fully cognizant of how little the traditional parties served the interests of the Nicaraguan people and, at the time of his death, was planning to start a national political movement. After his treacherous murder at the hands of Somoza's National Guard, the cooperatives were attacked and most of Sandino's followers were soon slaughtered by the U.S.-trained National Guard. Some *sandinista* columns fought on for a few more years in remote areas, but they too were eventually forced to abandon systematic armed resistance. Nonetheless, the spirit of Sandino and the example of his army lived on in the popular mind, nourished by eye-witness accounts and first-hand stories from *sandinista* survivors.

By exploiting his close ties to Washington and his position as head of the National Guard, Anastasio Somoza García soon emerged as the most powerful political figure in the country. He realized that Sandino and his Army to Defend National Sovereignty represented the greatest threat to the re-establishment of rule by a U.S.-backed elite. No doubt he also sensed that Sandino was the symbol of popular struggle and the key to the people's rediscovery of their true history. Thus the dictator was not content to have ordered the execution of the popular leader. He attempted to distort the memory of Sandino and his followers by having a slanderous anti-Sandino book published under his name. Somoza's efforts achieved some success, in that it was soon very difficult for the masses of Nicaraguans to obtain any favorable written accounts of the *sandinista* struggle within the country.

After Somoza took direct control of the government in 1936,

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he instituted an increasingly repressive family dictatorship that—mostly because of its close ties to the United States—would endure until militarily defeated by the the FSLN in 1979. However, despite bloody repression and the intense vilification of Sandino and his followers, popular struggle continued through the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, though clearly at a relatively low level. This period of struggle included military actions by both old *sandinistas* and younger patriots such as the "Generation of 44."

By the 1940s the full force of the Somoza dictatorship was being felt. Somoza had proven to be one of the United States' best "good neighbors," and had been lavishly received by Roosevelt in Washington. By the 1950s Nicaragua was a fully dependent producer of primary goods (mostly coffee and cotton), and an integral part of the U.S. system of political and economic control in the Western Hemisphere. Sandino's anti-imperialist popular struggle seemed to have been for naught. The guerrilla hero and the popular revolutionary struggle seemed to be slowly disappearing from the popular mind. There were occasional armed actions or putsch attempts by old *sandinistas* and other Nicaraguans who could no longer countenance the heavy-handed political and economic manipulation that characterized the Somozas and their friends. Students and workers (as in 1944) occasionally demonstrated against the regime, but lacked any clear ideological perspective in which to place their struggle. Opposition to the dictatorship came to be symbolized by the Conservative Party. Even the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (founded as a pro-Moscow Communist Party in 1944) often collaborated with traditional bourgeois politicians and Somoza-controlled unions. Somoza had taken over the Liberal Party and even went so far as to make pacts (1948 and 1950) with the Conservative Party, in an attempt to co-opt the only major focal point of opposition to his regime. Without even the militant liberalism that had originally motivated Sandino in his struggle, it was difficult for the diffuse opposition forces to gain the ideological perspective necessary to re-mobilize the masses against the forces of imperialism.

A poet once again helped the people take charge of their future. Rigoberto López Pérez was one of the Nicaraguan intellectuals who directly felt the far-reaching cultural implications

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of a dependent dictatorship subservient to U.S. imperialism. He, like the Cuban poet José Martí, felt compelled to exchange pen for pistol to liberate his country. In 1956 the young poet assassinated Somoza. In so doing he not only avenged Sandino, but spurred a much-needed re-examination of national conscience that would increasingly challenge the status quo.

Little by little the spirit of Sandino's struggle was once again being felt across the land. A new wave of guerrilla activities broke out in the countryside; one of the more famous of these was even led by Ramón Raudales, a veteran of Sandino's Army. The university students also began to show a new militancy and, for the first time, a small group began to study Marxist theory.

By the late 1950s, sectors of the Nicaraguan people were beginning to recover their popular history through the continuation of Sandino's struggle. But by this time historic conditions had changed substantially from the time of the first *sandinista* struggle. Western-style bourgeois democracy was increasingly being called into question in the Third World. The ardent Mexican nationalism that had so inspired Sandino was in large part discredited among Latin American intellectuals because of the failure of the subsequent Mexican regimes to implement the economic and social transformations promised by the Mexican Revolution.

In China and Vietnam, meanwhile, national liberation struggles had grown into socialist revolutions. Cuba was soon to take this road as well. The prestige enjoyed by the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist parties under Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh prompted many other leaders of national liberation struggles—such as the FLN cadres in Algeria—to try to apply Marxist ideas to their own countries.

Leaders of many of the anticolonial revolutions that swept Africa in the 1950s and 1960s were likewise openly suspicious of capitalist democracy and called for the development of new forms of "African Socialism." Henceforth, Third World nationalist movements increasingly turned to socialism and Marxism to explain their realities and nourish their revolutionary movements. Nicaragua was no exception.

In Latin America, the development of Marxism before the advent of the Cuban Revolution did not facilitate the appli-

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cation of the ideology to national conditions. The Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930) was one of the few who attempted to apply Marxism creatively to Latin American reality. His efforts were met with the most caustic criticism from the Communist International and many Latin American Communists. After this, the type of Marxism espoused by the Communist parties in Latin America tended to be dogmatic, sectarian, and generally ill-suited to Latin American conditions. The development of Nicaraguan Communism was no different. The Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), founded in 1944, maintained the closest of ties to the Soviet Union. Like most Latin American Communist parties prior to the 1960s, its ideology slavishly copied the bureaucratized Marxism of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the Party was virtually the only institution in the country which took Marxist ideas seriously. As such, it attracted the attention of emerging young student radicals like Carlos Fonseca Amador and Tomás Borge.

The PSN's conception of Marxism soon proved inadequate to the tasks the young militants were planning. The PSN dismissed Sandino as a petty-bourgeois nationalist and, like other traditional Communist parties in Latin America during the 1950s and early 1960s, was unwilling to engage in revolutionary activity. It claimed that the objective economic conditions did not yet allow for revolutionary class struggle. In contrast, the example of the Cuban Revolution had already helped to inspire some of the previously mentioned guerrilla activity in the late 1950s. As the Cuban revolutionaries adopted Marxist-Leninist ideas, their example became increasingly attractive to the young militants in Nicaragua. In July 1961 Carlos Fonseca, Tomás Borge, and Silvio Mayorga founded a new revolutionary organization—the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional.* Like many young Latin American revolutionaries, they modeled their organization on Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement and believed that guerrilla warfare—as outlined by Che Guevara—was the best method of implementing political change. Their sympathies thus moved from the orthodox outlook of the PSN to the dynamic and revolutionary Marxism being developed by the Cuban leaders. Che's theory of rural guerrilla warfare had borrowed from Sandino; the *sandinistas,* in turn, borrowed from the Cuban example to continue Sandino's struggle.

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The new generation thus began a movement that was the continuation of the popular struggle of Augusto Sandino's guerrilla army. Drawing heavily on the Cuban revolutionary experience and the writings of Guevara and Fidel Castro, they began to reinterpret Sandino's original struggle in the light of historic and ideological developments since his death. Even during his guerrilla war, Sandino had concluded that the Liberal and Conservative politicians were traitors and cowards and must be replaced by worker and peasant leaders. By studying their own fight for national identity and liberation in the light of similar struggles in Cuba, Vietnam, and Africa, the *sandinistas* were able to build on Sandino's populist notions and begin to infuse their movement with a coherent ideology.

At the urging of Carlos Fonseca, FSLN militants began to study Sandino's writings and tactics as they prepared for their first guerrilla actions in 1963. Colonel Santos López, one of the survivors of Sandino's army, joined the FSLN and offered valuable advice on military tactics. Stimulated by the Cuban example, the *sandinistas* believed that the only road to power was through armed struggle. However, like other young *fidelistas* throughout Latin America, they felt that launching rural guerrilla warfare was all that was necessary to convince the popular masses (beginning with the peasantry) to take up arms and join the struggle. In Nicaragua, as elsewhere in the region, this was a fundamental and very costly error. The FSLN's first attempts at guerrilla warfare (Río Coco and Río Bocay, 1963) met with tragic defeat. The new *sandinistas* had failed to do what their namesake had done so well—mobilize the local populace on the side of the guerrillas through well-planned political and organizational activity coordinated with and part of the armed struggle.

Withdrawing from their guerrilla adventures in the inhospitable mountainous jungle of northern Nicaragua, most of the remaining *sandinistas* began to engage in semi-legal political work in urban areas, in uneasy cooperation with the Nicaraguan Socialist Party. However, a few *sandinistas* like Rigoberto Cruz did remain in some rural areas to initiate important political work with the peasants.

The absurdity of the electoral farce that was developing in 1967 and the anti-revolutionary political opportunism of the

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PSN soon convinced the FSLN that returning to armed guerrilla struggle in the countryside was the only effective means of defeating the current Somoza dictatorship and returning the country to the people. Stimulated by Carlos Fonseca's leadership and the intensive study of Sandino's tactics and writings he advocated, the *sandinistas* gradually began to understand that more political and organizational work was necessary to ensure mass participation in the struggle against the dictatorship. However, before the vital importance of this lesson was completely clear, the second wave of FSLN guerrillas were already engaging the National Guard in combat in the region of the Darien Mountains in the Department of Matagalpa. Once again the FSLN proved incapable of resisting the superior military power of the National Guard. They had not yet fully assimilated the lessons to be learned from popular struggles for national liberation like those led by Sandino, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Fidel. They had not yet learned that the people's vanguard must become one with the people, setting the stage for the masses themselves to rise up and sweep away their enemies in a popular war of liberation.

Tragically, some of the FSLN's best cadres became isolated and surrounded at Pancasán in mid-1967. Although they offered heroic resistance, most were killed. Like the *fidelista* guerrilla currents all over Latin America (Che, for instance, was killed in Bolivia the same year), they suffered a disastrous military setback. And while this was occurring in the countryside, things were even worse in the cities. The traditional opposition forces continued to demonstrate their ineptitude. In contrast, the tenacity of the resistance waged by the FSLN focused national attention on its struggle and helped to turn a military defeat into a political victory. Beginning with the peasants and university students, the process of merging the vanguard and the mobilized masses into a unified fighting force was slowly getting underway. As Commander Henry Ruíz put it, "Pancasán reverberated in the popular conscience; its echo was felt in the bosom of the Nicaraguan people and the name *Frente Sandinista* began to spread to the most remote corners of the nation."

Unlike many other guerrilla movements in Latin America, the *sandinistas* were able to learn from the mistakes they made in Río Bocay and Pancasán. They demonstrated a great capacity

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for self-criticism and were thus able to transcend their initial error of isolating themselves from the masses. Through painful trial and error and through an increasingly astute study of Sandino's thought and tactics, as well as those of other revolutionary movements throughout the world, they were able to fashion a strategy that would eventually unleash the full power of the Nicaraguan people against the dictatorship.

In the period after Pancasán and the 1967 elections, the FSLN's increased prestige brought many new recruits, especially from among student youth in the cities. At this time the organization focused mainly on developing a base among the *campesinos* in the north central part of the country, in the mountains around Zinica. It was there that the urban recruits were sent. The work bore fruit and became the axis of the "prolonged people's war" concept that dominated the *sandinistas'* thinking at that time.

While the Zinica front was the focus of the FSLN's armed activity following Pancasán, increased attention was being paid to urban work that was necessarily clandestine. The FSLN began to establish what it called "intermediate organizations." These, in the words of Tomás Borge, made up the umbilical cord to the masses. "We had student organizations, worker organizations, neighborhood committees, Christian movements, artistic groups, and so on.... We led these intermediate organizations ourselves, through *compañeros* who followed the orientation of the *Frente*."

The success the *sandinistas* were having in winning *campesinos* to their cause in the mountains alarmed Somoza and the U.S. embassy. Large-scale, brutal counterinsurgency operations were launched. Peasants suspected of collaborating with the FSLN "disappeared," were tortured, hurled out of helicopters, or otherwise murdered. What amounted to concentration camps were set up in Waslala and Río Blanco at the northern and southern extremities of the area where the *Frente* was operating. The counter-revolutionary terror became so intense that the guerrillas were forced further and further back into the mountains, progressively separated from the inhabited areas where they had been gaining support. The "prolonged people's war" strategy that demanded a secure rural base area was reaching an impasse.

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While the *sandinistas* were evolving their theory of mass struggle, progressive sectors within the Catholic Church became more and more concerned with the conditions of the masses. Motivated by this concern and the growing "Liberation Theology" movement, they began to intervene actively in the process of social change. In Nicaragua part of this activity was initially focused around the activities of the Institute for Human Advancement (INPRHU). Employing the "conscientization" process developed by Paulo Freire in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, they began to raise the awareness of popular groups in rural and urban areas. This led to the development of mass-oriented organizations like the Federation of Rural Organizations, the Movement for the Liberation of the Woman, and the National Movement of Youth. Stressing literacy and popular education, critical thinking, and a problem-solving orientation, the Institute and the popular organizations that grew from it also began to mobilize sectors of the masses. As this process developed (from the mid-1960s on), it helped to buttress the FSLN's awareness of the need for mass mobilization. It contributed significantly to the organized incorporation of the masses into the armed struggle in the late 1970s. These developments also further strengthened the ties between progressive Catholic elements and the FSLN. Such ties eventually became so strong that prominent Church figures like Fathers Ernesto and Fernando Cardenal and Father Miguel D'Escoto became part of the *sandinista* movement. Others, following in the footsteps of the Colombian priest Camilo Torres, not only encouraged their parishioners to join the struggle, but even took up arms themselves.

Between Pancasán and late 1974, the FSLN carried on what it termed "accumulation of forces in silence." "Our work in that entire period took place through intermediate organizations, in ways that any theorist or dogmatist might have criticized. Everything from sending our militants to build latrines, teaching adults to read and write, treating the sick, or organizing festivals for the youth in order to introduce them to a process of political life, to the formation of organizations with revolutionary content." The "silence" was broken in a spectacular way with the December 27, 1974, seizure of the home of a wealthy and prominent *somocista* during a gala party for the U.S.

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ambassador. An FSLN commando unit held more than a dozen foreign diplomats and top *somocistas* for several days, finally forcing Somoza to release *sandinista* political prisoners, pay a large sum of money, and broadcast and publish FSLN communiques.

Developments subsequent to December 1974 were contradictory. On the one hand, the FSLN's spectacular feat earned it further prestige and belied Somoza's repeated claims that the guerrillas had been wiped out. But the state of siege the dictatorship imposed and the repression launched against the trade unions and other expressions of urban opposition—as well as the rural terror described above—caused the mass movement to undergo an abrupt downturn after the increasing struggles that had taken place in 1973-74.

Discussions concerning strategy intensified among the *sandinistas*. This was a period of reassessment throughout the Latin American left. Most of the guerrilla fronts launched during the first wave of struggle after the Cuban revolution had gone down to defeat. The shift to urban action by the surviving guerrilla currents was focusing on military action and individual terrorism, which likewise proved unsuccessful. At the same time, the electoral victory of the Popular Unity coalition in Chile in 1970 led many on the left to believe a "peaceful road to socialism" was possible. This usually meant working with sectors of the bourgeoisie in electoral action of the type rejected by the *sandinistas* in 1966-67.

It is to the *sandinistas'* great credit that they held firm against both the electoral illusions and the focus on military action that were widespread among Latin American radicals in the early and mid-1970s. While details of the internal debate in the FSLN that broke out in 1975 remain sketchy, it can be said in retrospect that the currents that were soon to emerge as three separate tendencies* were grappling with the problem of how to incorporate the masses into the struggle, without minimizing the crucial importance of the armed seizure of power and the revolutionary destruction of the dictatorship's apparatus of political repression, social oppression, and economic exploitation.

*Prolonged People's War, Proletarian, and Insurrectional or *Tercerista*.

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The separation into tendencies did not mean the disintegration of the *Frente*. Each current pursued the struggle according to its own lights; and as the crisis of the dictatorship deepened, all achieved successes. Efforts by the leaders to reestablish unity did not cease, although they were hampered by the imprisonment of key figures such as Tomás Borge and by the murder of Carlos Fonseca Amador at the hands of the National Guard in November 1976.

The three tendencies were to converge around the fresh tactical and strategic questions brought to the fore by the upsurge of mass struggle that opened in late 1977. As the urban masses moved into action after Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's murder in early 1978, the trend was for all three tendencies to learn both from the masses and from each other.

The mid-1970s division of the FSLN reflected different approaches and partial answers to the complex problem of taking political power and smashing the dictatorship. This problem was resolved as all three tendencies brought the best of their particular experiences and approaches to the final struggle, a process which was facilitated through their mature handling of unification and their willingness to learn from each other and work together even before the achievement of full unity in March 1979. The old divisions were then superseded by the historic victory of July 19, 1979.

The genius of FSLN ideology has been its practical application of Sandino's nationalist thought and Marxist concepts and methodology to the Nicaraguan reality. Thus segments of the middle class and radical church people continue to play an important role in the revolutionary process. The way in which the ideology develops in the future will, however, depend on evolving national and international conditions.

NOTES

1. Tomás Borge (Nicaraguan Minister of Interior and the only surviving founder of the FSLN) in the Preface to Humberto Ortega Saavedra, *50 años de lucha sandinista* (Managua: Colección las Segovias, Ministry of Interior, 1979 or 1980), p. 3.
2. See *Nuestro Rubén Darío* (Managua: Ministry of Culture, 1980) and, of related interest, Julio Valle Castillo, ed., *Poetas Modernistas de Nicaragua (1880 1927)* (Managua: Promoción Cultural, Banco de América, 1978).

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3. Neil Macaulay, *The Sandino Affair* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), p. 53. This is a very useful work on Sandino and his army.
4. Sergio Ramírez, ed., *El pensamiento vivo de Sandino*, 5th ed. (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana, 1979), pp. 87-88. Ramírez is now a member of the ruling junta in Nicaragua.
5. See Macaulay, and especially Gregorio Selser, *Sandino* (Monthly Review Press, 1981).

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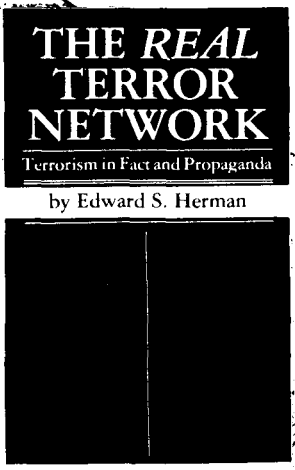

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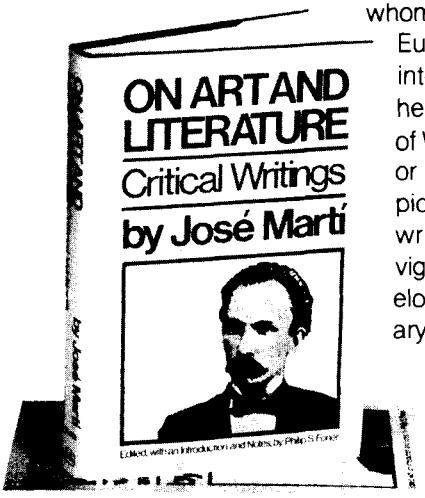
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WHEN SOCIALIST REVOLUTION EXPLODED IN MEXICO

By Rey Devis

"A low fellow named López at the head of a small gang has been roving about various towns of the Chalco District proclaiming war against the rich and passing out *hacienda* lands to the natives. From the districts roundabout, forces have been mobilized to chase out this rabble."

You'd have to don Superman's X-ray eyes to read between these lines enough to realize what this newspaper story was describing—Mexico's first revolution overtly and explicitly based on the ideals of socialism. Karl Marx was alive and well in London and polishing up his socialist theories. Abe Lincoln was only three years a-moldering in the grave, and Benito Juárez was president of Mexico—February 26, 1868.

Not much is known about Julio López Chávez except that he had been exposed to socialist thinking through the "Moderna y Libre" School. It was established in the Chalco district near Mexico City by a Greek socialist named Rhodkanaty, who in turn was a disciple of Charles Fourier, the French Utopian socialist.

Probably the best introduction to López is the Manifesto he and his supporters issued on April 20, 1869:

Citizens of Mexico, the hour to learn whose hearts are firm has arrived; arrived is the day when the slaves rise as one man to reclaim their rights downtrodden by the powerful. Brothers, arrived is the moment to clear the air, to ask an accounting from those who have

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Rey Devis has written extensively on Ricardo Flores Magón, a forerunner of the Mexican Revolution. He edited Ethel Duffy Turner's *Revolution in Baja California: Ricardo Flores Magón's High Noon* (Blaine Ethridge Books, 13977 Penrod, Detroit, Mich. 48223).

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routinely demanded one from us, to impose duties on those who know only privileges. . . .

For untold centuries we've walked in pain, fatigue, poverty, ignorance, tyranny, but the day of sacred vengeance is with us.

What do we own on the face of this earth, we who live nailed to work? Who benefits from the sweat of our brows, the tears of our eyes, the pain of our backs, the weariness of our arms, the fatigue of our feet, the agony of our hearts? Who among us ever happily anticipates reaping what he sows, when they snatch it all away from us?. . .

When we came into this world we found our inheritance was our father's debts, obviously slaves bound to continue working in the same old place under the same old system by way of covering that famous debt. But our wages don't go up, our credit doesn't expand, and our kids inherit our debts.

And who has helped hold us in silence, humility, ignorance, and slavery? The church! By its hypocritical missions it has woven a web of lies about a spiritual salvation in some place other than this earth. Our mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters fervently pray to all the saints to save us from this horrible situation.

But all in vain because – according to the priests – we have come to this vale of tears to suffer and we must wait for heaven to bless us with resignation. . . .

The priests have deceived us and profaned the doctrine of Christ, who should be reclaimed from the rascals, being that his promises of charity, peace, and harmony touch our hearts with great joy.

Let religion reign, but down with the church and even more with its priests.

And what about this thing we call "government" but is really tyranny? Where is government [when we need it]. . . ?

Thus we proclaim ourselves against all forms of government. We want peace and order.

We asked for lands, and [President Benito] Juárez betrayed us. Why can't we have the little piece of land we till? By what right have a few individuals grabbed the land that should belong to all?

Our brothers, we want socialism, which is the most perfect form of society, which is the philosophy of truth and justice, which embraces that unshakeable triad, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

We want to root out the present vicious state of exploitation that destines the many to poverty and the few to riches and high living, that condemns the many to poverty although working with all their might while happiness is bestowed on loafers.

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We want to sow and reap this earth in peace, without exploitation, giving all the freedom to sow in the place best for them without paying tribute, granting them the liberty of gathering together as they see fit, forming large or small societies free of those who would boss around or punish.

We want to wipe out every symbol of tyranny among people, living in brotherhood and mutual assistance and establishing the Universal Republic of Harmony.

Mexican people: this is our simple plan, that we will make triumph in some form and in pursuit of the true victory of Liberty. . .!

We'll be persecuted, maybe shot. That doesn't matter, as long as hope beats in our hearts. What better thing have we to do with our lives than pitch off our perpetual weight of poverty and suffering? We are scorned as liberals, damned as men, and dragged in the dirt as socialists. . . .

Let us lift up our face to calmly seek our salvation, which resides only in our own selves.

We want land, we want work, we want freedom. We must save ourselves from suffering; we must preserve order; in short we need to establish a social contract between people based on mutual respect.

Long live socialism! Long live liberty!

Julio López Chávez turned out to be as good a prophet as socialist, for he was indeed persecuted and he was indeed killed. The June 23, 1869, *El Monitor Republicano* baldly states: "Julio López, that mutinous trouble-maker, has been executed in Chalco as a repeat-offender gang leader."

Even Francisco Zarco, crusading journalist, liberal, political prisoner, underground fighter, wrote: "Julio López ended his career on the gallows. He was invoking communist principles and was simply a common criminal. Destruction of his gang safeguards properties in many other districts. . . . The time will come when the question of private ownership will have to be faced—but under laws drawn up with careful study, calmly and dispassionately, not by violent, revolutionary means."

But an idea can't be killed by hangmen's knots or name-calling. All through Dictator Diaz's decades-long, tortured, peace-of-the-grave, the ideas of Julio and people like him lived on to bloom again in the revolutions sparked by Ricardo Flores Magón, in the so-called Mexican Revolution, and to this day.

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REDS II

By Paul Le Blanc

Steve Nelson: American Radical by Steve Nelson, James R. Barrett, and Rob Ruck. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981. 454 pages, $19.95.

Many have seen John Reed, one of the founders of the American Communist Party, reincarnated in Warren Beatty's blockbuster film, *Reds*. Those who are curious about the historical realities on which the film is based may want to consult Robert Rosenstone's recent study, *Romantic Revolutionary, A Biography of John Reed*, which has just been republished in paperback by Vintage, and which does justice to Reed's life and commitments. Rosenstone concludes:

The impulse to experience, question and discover carried Reed through realms of ideas and to many sites of physical struggle, turned him into a critic of American culture and then an opponent of capitalism.... John Reed was one of those rare individuals who see beyond things as they are, act upon dreams of what they may become, and are willing to clothe their vision with all the frail power of mortal flesh.

Those who are curious about the fortunes of Reed's party after his death in 1920 are faced with a thick forest of publications and contending interpretations. One of the most valuable is *Steve Nelson, American Radical*, written by another of those "rare individuals," a seasoned veteran (and eventual drop-out) of the Communist Party, with the assistance of two history graduate students from the University of Pittsburgh.

Paul Le Blanc is a graduate student in labor history at the University of Pittsburgh.

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Nelson's life rivals John Reed's in richness, excitement, and amazing breadth of experience. As Stjepan Mesaros, a young Croatian immigrant who came to the United States in the wake of the First World War, he was drawn into the flourishing subculture of working-class socialism that was a part of many immigrant communities of that time. It was in this period that large numbers of immigrant radicals were shifting their loyalties from the old Socialist Labor Party, the Socialist Party of America, and the Industrial Workers of the World to the younger and more dynamic Communist Party. By 1923 he was a dedicated militant in the struggle for a working-class revolution that would usher in the cooperative commonwealth that communism was thought to be.

Nelson, like the party which he joined, became increasingly acclimated to the realities of American life—one might say "Americanized," but this hardly meant "domesticated." Of course, the quality of the party's Marxism suffered badly from a profoundly sectarian twist in the late 1920s and early 1930s, then from a heavy reformist dilution after 1935, and always from an uncritical attitude toward the Soviet Union's ruling elite. But Nelson, like so many others, was less concerned with theoretical problems than with (1) the immediate social struggles in which the CP was engaged, (2) the ongoing practical details of party life, and (3) the reassuring beauty and rationality of the socialist vision (which he chose to believe was being realized under the Stalin dictatorship in Russia). First an enthusiastic rank-and-filer, soon a budding leader, he worked in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Illinois to organize the unorganized: steelworkers, mineworkers, electrical workers, auto workers, and others. Nelson's descriptions of these efforts are vibrant and rich in detail.

Recognizing Nelson's leadership potential, the party sent him to the Workers School in New York for additional training and education. An incurable activist, he was more than happy to return to organizing among miners—and, as the depression hit, among the unemployed—in the anthracite districts of Pennsylvania. Two years later he was sent to the Lenin School in Moscow. While abroad, in 1933, he carried out several assignments as a courier for the Communist International's secret service (in Nazi Germany, Kuomintang China, and elsewhere), transmitting information and funds to sections of the Communist underground. This was followed by four more years of activity in the United States, before international events once again intervened in the form of the Spanish Civil War.

Communists throughout the world organized the International Brigades to defend the left-liberal government of Spain against a concerted fascist attack. In 1937-38, Nelson served as a highly popular political commissar of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. He fought in many battles and was severely wounded.

Back in the United States during the Second World War, Nelson was a leading functionary in California. (His brief friendship in this

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period with nuclear physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer later resulted, during the McCarthy era, in groundless charges that the two men were passing "atomic secrets" to Russia.) Elevated to the national leadership after a major shake-up in the CP, he moved to New York in 1945, then on to Pittsburgh in 1948.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the Communist Party had become the largest and most influential left-wing force in the United States. It seemed to represent the best of both worlds as a symbol of a revolutionary alternative to a capitalist order which had seemed to collapse in the depression of the 1930s, and at the same time as a dynamic left fringe of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" effort to establish a liberal, capitalist, welfare state. With a mushrooming membership of over 80,000, it played a major role in unions and in various social movements and cultural currents. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, with the recovery of the U.S. economy and the onset of the Cold War confrontation with the USSR, American Communists faced a frontal assault as "subverters of free enterprise" and as "agents of a foreign power." Many real and imagined "reds" suffered during this period, and as the most notorious Communist in Pittsburgh – Nelson himself ran a six-year gauntlet of Congressional investigations, screaming "exposures" in the news media, trials, and prison.

While the CP was badly damaged by such harsh repression, what ultimately shattered it was its own internal contradictions. In 1956, with the Khruschev revelations of Stalin's brutal crimes, followed by the Russian invasion of Hungary, a crisis shook the American Communist Party to its roots. Nelson and others had long felt that the party should adopt more flexible policies on many questions. But now they also fought for a more independent and critical-minded attitude toward the USSR and for the eradication of Stalinist influences which had (in more ways than they knew) damaged their movement. This heterogeneous and often confused inner-party rebellion proved no match for the more intransigent and "orthodox" CP leaders. In a wave of demoralization and disillusionment, thousands of long-time Communists, including Steve Nelson, left the organization.

Yet Steve Nelson was never able to abandon his deep commitment to socialist ideals or to ongoing struggles for social justice. One need not share his present enthusiasm for "Eurocommunism" in order to appreciate his impatience with the notion that God (i.e., socialism, the working class, etc.) had somehow failed him. As a leader of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, he remained active in the fight against imperialist aggression in Vietnam, for civil rights in the United States, and for civil liberties throughout the world. His concern to pass important lessons on to young student and working-class activists of today is evident throughout this book.

Nelson emerges from this narrative as a warm, honest, and

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thoughtful man. But more than with most memoirs of this type, we get a feeling for the day-to-day experience of a Communist activist and organizer, and for the social and cultural realities that helped to shape his life. Often he directly confronts past beliefs and experiences with greater candor than one might expect. Much credit undoubtedly goes to the sympathetic but critical-minded scholars who collaborated with him in writing the book. Their own sensitivity to the interpenetration of social and political history as well as of the personal and the political elements obviously resulted in the kinds of probing questions which drew from Nelson much of value that might otherwise have been lost.

These qualities, plus the amazing variety of experience which Nelson had in the Communist movement, makes this book one of the finest memoirs of American Communism.

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A VALUABLE RESOURCE

By Chibuzo Nnate Nwoke

The Race for Resources: Continuing Struggles over Minerals and Fuels by Michael Tanzer. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980. 285 pages, paperback $6.50.

Michael Tanzer's *Race for Resources* is a recent and very useful contribution to the literature on the distribution of the world's natural resources and the role they play in the changing international power struggles between the "have" and "have not" nations in the world economy. This latest book is an extension of the author's earlier work on energy resources, *The Energy Crisis: World Struggle for Power and Wealth* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974). *Race for Resources* is important and welcome: it enlarges our comprehension of the main features of both the world's fuel and nonfuel situation.

Tanzer dismisses the widely proclaimed mineral crisis for both fuel and nonfuel minerals and explains the situation instead in the context of the operations of the international capitalist system. From his perspective, the relevant and more pressing problem for contemporary political economy concerns the operations of the giant multinational oil and mining corporations based in the metropole and supported by their states and network of financial institutions which dominate the international minerals industries. In the race for resources between the advanced capitalist countries, the prize is, as Tanzer shows, the low-cost, high-profit minerals of the Third World countries. However, "unfortunately for the Third World, their economies and military powers were not enough developed to stave off the predatory foreign powers, and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they were overwhelmed, either taken as outright colonies or as neocolonies." (p. 25)

This work is one of the most comprehensive treatments available of the important issues for understanding the political economy of

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internationalized raw-materials. Its particular merit lies in the fact that the author has managed to present this complex subject in a readable, non-technical style, without losing sophistication or scholarly rigor.

The book is organized in three sections. The author begins with a useful overview of the general situation in the international capitalist extractive sphere, analyzes the present supply and demand situation, and then introduces the basic political economy of minerals production, corporate and government strategies, and the role of labor in the minerals industries. Notice how chapter 6, "Labor: The Human Side," begins. He writes:

> Behind the enormous profits of the multinational minerals and metal companies, apart from the corporate and political intricacies that form the web of worldwide exploitation and dominance, outside the factories that process the substances, and far away from the companies and consumers who use the final products, a sound can be heard. It is a sound composed of the myriad of human suffering—death by violence and disease, the agony of rotting bodies, the groans of broken bones and torn muscles, the hunger and cold of people without basic freedoms. It is also the sound of anger, protest, rebellion, and armed struggle. It is the sound of the miners. (p. 83)

The second section of Tanzer's *Race for Resources* is devoted to case studies of the more important minerals produced in the world today. These include oil and gas, coal, uranium, copper, bauxite, nickel, and iron ore. The author also describes the operations of Amax (a leading U.S. multimetal company) and Anglo-American (a leading South African multimetal company), in order to show in further detail how rapacious the system of capitalism, based on profit maximization, can be.

Like most scholarly works, Tanzer's *Race for Resources* not only presents the historical context while emphasizing the contemporary situation, but also attempts to look into the future. The third section of the book, captioned "Prospects for the Future," focuses on some likely forthcoming developments in the minerals industries. The five chapters in this section discuss technology controlled by the advanced countries as the key to the minerals industries, the importance of "safe" countries and internal colonies for imperialism, the limited extent of the competition posed by the socialist countries (the Soviet Union and China) today vis-à-vis the advanced capitalist countries, and the prospects of OPEC-type producer associations by Third World countries in the minerals sector. In the final chapter Tanzer turns to an examination of how the international minerals problem might be resolved and, more generally, on how mineral resources could be used in a rational world. Such an examination, he writes, serves to highlight "the absurdity of the present world capitalist sys-

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tem of mineral and fuel use which most of us have come to take for granted as 'normal' or 'efficient.'" (p. 239)

On the whole, Tanzer's new book is informed, readable, and successfully embraces most of the issues at stake on the political economy of international raw materials and Third World development. It is a particularly welcome contribution to the developing field of international political economy and should be a useful collection of information for Third World governments and for analysts interested in expanding these governments' degrees of freedom in their dealings with international oil and mining entities.

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MARX AND HISTORICAL METHOD

By James M. Cypher

D. Ross Gandy. *Marx & History*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979. $15.00, 183pp.

Marx has often been attacked by critics of historical and dialectical materialism. What they have taken to be his theory of history has been termed economistic, reductionistic, deterministic, and—more directly—vulgar. Some have accused Marx of "periodicity" and "historicism," arguing that he saw all societies marching through a series of stages beginning with primitive communalism and ending in full communism. In retreat from this vision some Marxists have discovered a distinction between a humanistic "Young Marx" and an economistic "Old Marx." Others have found this distinction fatuous, holding out for a structural Marx purged of humanism and historicity. Still others have objected to the emphasis placed on the economic base and the mode of production, arguing for the relative autonomy of the state and the political sphere.

Without confronting these numerous tendencies directly, Ross Gandy sets out to capture Marx's views on history. Gandy's method is based on a comprehensive rereading of all 39 volumes of the Marx-Engels *Werke*.* In all, Gandy cites the works of Marx two thousand times. Yet this is no tedious tome full of long quotations. The author's

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*Gandy makes no real distinction between Marx and Engels, arguing that they can be treated together. References to Marx and Engels here will follow this approach.

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style is masterfully light, yet deft and penetrating. The breadth, depth, and clarity of this book can best be appreciated through a reading of one of the several recent books that have appeared on Marx's analysis of history.* In relation to other works in this area in recent years, Gandy's is the only one which shows a detailed knowledge of the historical context within which Marx was writing.** Almost any reader will find their own grasp of history, particularly nineteenth-century history, strengthened through a reading of this book.

The first three chapters are concerned with precapitalist modes of production, capitalism, and communism. For anyone curious as to Marx's views on postcapitalist society, Gandy's chapter on communism, with numerous citations from the *Werke*, should serve as an excellent summary. From communism Gandy then goes into Marx's concept of classes. Here he shows that there is much more to dialectics and historical change than the notion of class struggle. Finally, with the necessary background in place, he arrives at the intellectual battlefield—Marx's overall analysis of history. To this he adds an appendix dealing with Marx's theory of revolution. Since Gandy is concerned to show that his study is steeped in the Marx-Engels *Werke*, it is surprising that he devotes so little space to the dynamics of capitalism. The book's strengths are to be found elsewhere than in an analysis of the method of *Capital* or, unfortunately, in the historical studies, such as the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, The Civil War in France*, and Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England*. Unfortunate because here Marx does show that he *is* able to describe and analyze the dynamics of nineteenth-century Europe (and feudal Europe) with remarkable clarity and insight, given the level of historiography of the times.

What was Marx's conception of history? Gandy argues that any analysis of Marx's conceptualization of historical dynamics must go well beyond the often quoted passage from the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. It is here that he states: "In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designed as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society." From this sentence, and a few companion lines on the idea that the political and ideological superstructure rises on the economic base and is conditioned by it, more

*G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Melvin Rader, *Marx's Interpretation of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and William H. Shaw, *Marx's Theory of History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978).

**Although not *directly* concerned with the materialist conception of history *per se*, Hal Draper's masterful *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution I* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977) stands out as a notable exception to the above generalization. Certain sections of the definitive first volume (Books I & II) might well be read *after* reading Gandy - particularly Part II of Book I, "The Theory of the State," and all of Book II, especially the sections on "Oriental Despotism."

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than one writer has "deduced" Marx's "theory" of history. As Gandy suggests, this approach at best misconstrues Marx's analysis and normally results in formulations that are reductionistic, vulgar, *and* totally inaccurate. For reasons stated below, the unfinished task of explicating Marx's materialist conception of history must entail an integration of Marx and Engels' entire historical works (including their journalism and their letters). Gandy's book is basically an introduction to such an endeavor, pointing the reader in a promising direction while vigorously denouncing the still popular notion that Marx was an economic determinist.

This misunderstanding of Marx's materialist conception of history is based largely in a crude exegesis of brief passages from the above-mentioned preface and *The German Ideology*. There are two central premises that arise from this sort of exercise: (1) that Marx argued that historical change was sequential and unilinear, and (2) that the economic base (or more crudely, technology) determines the superstructure. This argument sometimes occurs in a weaker formulation, causality overwhelmingly running from base to superstructure.

The first misconception arises largely out of the fact that precapitalist societies were not well understood in the nineteenth century. Marx struggled with more than one formulation of what became known as the Archaic or Asiatic Mode of Production. The Asiatic mode presents particular problems for those who hold to a unilinear concept of historical dynamics because in its heightened or despotic form this mode is resistant to change, and change is not brought about via inner dynamics (i.e., class struggle). Rather, in this form the state "swallows" society and is "fused" to society. Unlike feudalism where the state is the semi-autonomous landowner-aristocrat, the state here is over-arching, all-encompassing. Because of this form, the Asiatic mode becomes timeless, yet it can be exploded from outside via war and conquest. In other words, only under particular historical circumstances will the Asiatic or Archaic mode give way—either to slavery or some other higher mode of production that will transform itself through inner dynamics.* Although Marx did hold that there was an inner dynamic that had driven parts of Western Europe from slavery through feudalism to capitalism (and raised the prospect of socialism) he did not argue that such transitions were inevitable. He clearly recognized and repeated that any transitional period may result in the mutual ruin of the contending classes. Thus there is adequate space here for the historical detours and twists taken by Germany, the second serfdom of Eastern Europe, the Bonapartist state, and the peculiar non-development of Spain after the *Siglo de Oro*.

*On this issue see Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution I*, Book II, chapters 21, 22.

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The second misconception, like the first, stems from a casual misreading of Marx on the relationship between base and superstructure. In the preface Marx spoke of the mode of production *conditioning* "the social, political and intellectual life process in general." A similar approach had been taken in *The German Ideology*, a work that, according to Engels in 1888, "proves only how incomplete our knowledge of economic history still was at the time." Later in a letter to Conrad Schmidt of October 27, 1890, Engels sought to clarify the base-superstructure relationship in capitalist society, particularly between the economic and the political:

> [The state] while having in the main to follow the movement of production, reacts in its turn, *by virtue of its inherent relative independence*—that is, the relative independence once transferred to it and gradually further developed—upon the conditions and course of production. It is the interaction of two unequal forces: on the one hand, the economic movement, on the other, the new political power, which strives for as much independence as possible, and which having once been established is endowed with a movement of its own. On the whole, the economic movement gets its way, but it has also to suffer reactions from the political movement. (Italics added.)

In other elaborations of the materialist conception of history Engels pointed not only to the lack of a one-to-one correspondence of economic base to the political superstructure, but also to the relative autonomy of philosophy and ideology – all four interacting within a complex web of interdependence which would on more than one historical occasion lead to conditions where the superstructure conditioned and circumscribed movements in the base. What all of this suggests, as Gandy points out, is that the exegetical method of quoting the preface, *The German Ideology*, and selected snippets of Marx's work yields a caricature of the materialist conception of history—a cheap caricature that has been paraded as "historical materialism" for much too long.

In writing history with a materialist emphasis Marx was making a radical break with idealistic philosophical trends, particularly Hegelian. Yet he never offered an over-arching, all-inclusive axiomatic theory of history, much less a technological or economically determined theory of history. Marx, in fact, never used the terms historical or dialectical materialism. Indeed, after publishing the preface Marx strongly rebuked a Russian sociologist who claimed that Marx had postulated an all-inclusive universal theory of human history. Marx responded that the preface statement was a "historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe." (p. 9)

Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* states that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Gandy, however, argues that the concept of class struggle does not have general

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(or primary) explanatory power until the period of the breakdown of feudalism in Western Europe. He further argues that the only way to make sense of Marx's few scattered comments on the *scope* of his historical method is to argue that Marx was dealing almost exclusively with Western Europe during this period. Gandy argues that class struggle hardly developed in pre-British India, for example. He offers a distinction between class struggles and *national struggles* and *religious struggles*, both of which can and have been devoid of, or at least not centrally infused with, class struggle. To support this position, Gandy points to battles between Greece and Persia, Rome and Carthage, the Crusades of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the sixteenth century struggle between Spain and England, the mercantilist sea battles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the Crimean War in the nineteenth, arguing that all these were national struggles. Here and elsewhere he flatly rejects a universal-unilinear model of history.

What all this seems to demand, then, is a certain subtlety of thought in approaching various modes of production, social formations, political forms, and historical moments. It demands an acute awareness of the fact that Marx was working with a very fruitful, unfinished, and broad formulation of historical dynamics which, as Hal Draper points out, left

> plenty of room, for overlapping forms, fossil leftovers, lateral diffusion of cultures, reciprocal influences, and a host of other complications in the ordinary pattern of historical inquiry. The idea that Marx meant that each "progressive" epoch had to come to an end before the next in line of destiny could begin, or that everywhere the epochs goosestepped in fixed sequence like a parade, is simply grotesque. (*Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution I*, Book II, p. 539)

Thus it seems correct to offer a distinction between a materialist conception of history which Marx used, and a concept of a universal all-encompassing, rigid, sequential, deterministic historical materialism which Marx denied.

In addition to his contextual interpretation of Marx's historical method, Gandy sustains a considerable discussion of the social relations of production. In a period when too many Marxists are using the term class struggle as a *deus ex machina*, it is well to remember that Marx made a distinction between class struggle and class antagonism. Class struggle is the conscious effort by a class to alter social relations and ultimately the entire social formation (i.e., both the mode of production and the superstructure). Class antagonism is the individualistic or combined but isolated effort to alter social relations in one particular instance or situation. Class antagonism, such as a strike, may or may not lead to class struggle, but it is *not* class struggle. It seems to be Gandy's view that twentieth-century capitalism has

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all but eliminated class struggle in the advanced capitalist nations. Many readers will disagree.*

Although Gandy's book offers a careful and enlightening study of social relations, the state, law, and ideology, the sweeping failures of capitalist forces of production to mesh with exchange relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries receive inadequate treatment. Marx's emphasis on dynamic disequilibrium between forces and relations of production receives only modest attention, though his emphasis on capitalist instability and crisis have certainly been confirmed in the twentieth century despite the fact that the interplay of the forces of production with class relationships, the state, and ideology has not led to the socialism Marx anticipated. Marx's materialist conception of history, in the form suggested here, holds out the promise of understanding and clarifying this complex process. Constructing a more precise analysis of the interweaving of the mode of production with the superstructure and the dynamics of this process remains an urgent, if difficult, uncompleted task for those working in Marx's tradition.

Nevertheless, all but the specialist will find much that is new, unexpected, and clarifying in this short book. Gandy's treatment of Marx's method is straightforward and illuminating. Specialists will find Gandy's approach much more persuasive than that of other recent writers who (with the exception of Draper) either depict a deterministic Marx or rail against such a parody. How did Marx view precapitalist history? What were his views on socialism? How did he formulate his theory of revolution? Was he a determinist? Anyone with an interest in these and numerous other questions will find that Gandy has done a masterful job of concisely, clearly, and accurately presenting Marx's response. More than that we cannot ask.

*Gandy seems to feel that the state can contain class struggle due to the unprecedented material prosperity achieved in the post-Second World War boom. Engels earlier dealt with this issue regarding state legitimation in England in the 1850–80 period. In his preface to the 1892 English edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which should be re-read with reference to current socio-economic dynamics in the advanced capitalist countries, he brilliantly shows how superstructural elements penetrate and condition the base, thereby temporarily displacing class struggle. Implicitly, Engels here refutes Gandy.

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CORRESPONDENCE

CORDIAL REPLY TO E.P. THOMPSON'S "LETTER TO AMERICA"

By John Somerville

Of course your book is not anti-American. Every American should read and heed its most timely warnings. It could not fail to make him or her a better American, and he or she would, in the bargain, enjoy your style of writing about the politics of omnicide and anti-omnicide. You have a light and personal touch with heavy subjects, and, without losing an iota of dignity or professional responsibility, can show wit, humor, passion, compassion, and the surpassing moral virtue of indignation.

In something by definition so pluralistic as the international peace movement, the functional units of which are organizations, there is of course a sense in which each organization must, in its actions, give priority to that aspect of peace work for which it was created. But this fact should not obviate its giving support and cooperation to any other aspect of the total effort. Peace is a political problem, but peace organizations ought not to relate to one another the way political parties normally do. They ought to relate to one another the way political parties would if they discovered that the hall in which they were carrying on their debates had caught fire and was burning down. What I would like to say in reply to your letter, is, I think, entirely in the spirit of your approach. First, in relation to the role of language.

The central problem is to prevent the universal holocaust called nuclear war. But there has so far been a general failure to notice that calling it "war" is demonstrably incorrect linguistically, and, what is more important, adds greatly to the difficulty of solving the problem. The public and the government suffer from a massive case of linguistic

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self-deception arising from the fact that they have gone on using an old and familiar word—war—to denote a new thing that has a superficial resemblance to the old thing called war, but which in reality has become something as qualitatively different from war as death is from disease.

What we have always called war is understood by everyone as a form of physical combat after which it was always possible to count on the fact that there would be a habitable earth left, together with a majority of the human race. Since nuclear combat can now terminate the human race and render the planet uninhabitable, I propose "omnicide" as a more appropriate name for it. Would it not help all of us, logically and morally, instead of saying "our government is preparing for nuclear war," to say, "our government is preparing for omnicide"? Would the government be inclined to argue that we could win omnicide or that the nation could survive omnicide?

In relation to what the media have muted and suppressed in this country (I wonder whether the same thing took place in yours) the most unforgivable case was the almost complete failure to report the proposals made by the Soviet government (and Warsaw Pact bloc) to the American government (and NATO bloc) for a treaty that neither side would be the first to use nuclear weapons. These proposals were officially and publicly made three times—in 1976, 1979, and 1980—but each time were rejected by the U.S. government behind closed doors, without any discussion in Congress or any explanation to the American people, who are to this day almost wholly unaware that the proposals were ever made.

The acceptance of such a treaty by both superpowers ought to be a political demand of high priority in the peace movement of every country. It is obvious that the very refusal by one superpower to agree to such a treaty when it is proposed by the other will make first-use far more likely than before by increasing tension and multiplying the chances of misunderstanding.

How could such a common-sense proposal, touching an issue so grave as omnicide, be ignored? Only by the cold-war conditioning that endlessly and mindlessly insists nothing good could come from the Soviets. The cold war must be exposed, analyzed, ridiculed, laughed out of court, and driven from the market place by a combination of cognitive and affective means. After all, the Soviets *are* people, and they *do* want to live. But if they are pushed into a corner by the blackmail that demands a choice between surrender or omnicide, they (their government) will choose omnicide just as stupidly as ours would if the Soviets tried omnicidal blackmail on us.

In the thirties when I was a graduate student of social philosophy and societal practice at Columbia I became interested in the Soviet

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Union as the largest-scale deliberate societal "experiment" that could be studied at first hand. I learned the language and was given a post-doctoral grant for two years of independent research there. From the beginning of this first-hand Soviet experience I was appalled at the evident scale of the anti-Soviet mythology that was current in the West. Postwar, I tried to be as best I could a bridge between East and West in the interest of human survival.

Speaking affectively, when you know Soviet people as individuals it is impossible not to like them, and equally impossible not to detest the extent to which their acceptance of their own bureaucracy can poison their behavior as human beings. However, that is not the only way people can poison themselves, and a lifetime of international experience has convinced me that the net result is not different elsewhere. In any case, the issue between world peace (human survival) and omnicide will not be decided by individuals as such, but by the policies of the respective bureaucracies. The bottom line is that the Soviet-Warsaw Pact bureaucracy has a peace policy of common sense while the American-NATO bureaucracy has a policy of nuclear omnicide.

A powerful antidote to the cold-war poison is personal contact, discussion, dialogue, and debate with the Soviets. There is no other cognitive way to understand their actual beliefs, and no other affective way to know they are actually human. It was relatively easy to convince members of the American Philosophical Association of this, but I had to argue a full year with the U.S. Department of State before it would allow Soviet philosophers to come here and present papers at annual meetings of our national Association. After we broke the ice in 1962, other disciplines followed suit; later, regular exchanges of professors and students were arranged through annual governmental agreements which, by the way, are now threatened with curtailment by the Reagan administration, *déjà vu* in all its aspects.

I found it possible also to arrange programs of dialogue and debate with the Soviets at the World Congresses of Philosophy. You may be interested to know that the Proceedings volume, *Soviet Marxism and Nuclear War: An International Debate,* consisting of the papers and discussion in the Special Colloquium I chaired at the XVth World Congress of Philosophy, has just been published here by Greenwood Press. In this extended debate, the first of its kind, the leading Soviet paper was presented by the Vice President of their Academy of Sciences who made clear they would choose omnicide rather than surrender.

But to awaken the general public, the need and the way to prevent omnicide have to be presented affectively as well as cognitively. Since the best known and most powerful of affective symbols are Hiroshima and Nagasaki—what our government did to them—I proposed to the

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Japanese a binational Union of American and Japanese Professionals Against Nuclear Omnicide, now established. My documentary play, *The Crisis: True Story About How the World Almost Ended,* based on the memoir (death-bed confession?) of Robert Kennedy, dramatizes the fact that the first deliberate decision of any nuclear power to end the human world was made by the American government in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. The TV spectacular called *Missiles of October,* which appeared *after* the play (and reappears each October), falsifies history and contradicts Robert Kennedy's own account, as the footnote documentation in *The Crisis* demonstrates. John and Robert Kennedy admittedly "expected" from nuclear war waged against the USSR nothing less than "the end of mankind" (their own words). The end didn't come then only because the Soviets *unexpectedly* obeyed the ultimatum to remove their missile bases from Cuba unilaterally—without any reciprocal removal of our missile bases from Turkey. This omnicidal blackmail thenceforth became the model for U.S. foreign policy. (Witness the public declarations of Defense Secretary Schlesinger in 1975 that, "under no circumstances could we disavow the first use of nuclear weapons," and of President Carter at the UN in 1977 that the United States would use them first if any attack, even with "conventional" weapons, were made against us "or our allies.") The play has been staged so far only in Sweden and Japan (where it sold 50,000 copies in three months). As no American publisher would touch it, I myself have had it printed and circulated here, where it has been rather widely used as study material in university courses.

Our primary task in peace education is to make the known truth credible to the people who elect governments. If governments then refuse to carry out the will to live of the people who elected them, the people must be reminded that they themselves are the court of last resort and final responsibility, as I pointed out (by quoting the American Declaration of Independence) in *The Peace Revolution: Ethos and Social Process.* It then becomes not only the "right" of the people, but, according to the Declaration, their "duty" to "throw off such government" and replace it with one that will respect their "inalienable right to life," on which all else depends.

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(continued from inside front cover)

MR readers will be interested to learn of the establishment of the Center for Socialist History as a nonprofit, tax-exempt institution to promote research and publication in the field of the history of socialism. The Executive Director is Richard Broadhead, and one of the six-member Board of Directors is Hal Draper, author of *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, two volumes of which have been published to date by Monthly Review Press. Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff have agreed to be Sponsors. Anyone wishing to contribute money or ideas, or interested in learning more about the Center's intentions and plans should write to: Center for Socialist History, 2633 Etna, Berkeley, CA 94704 or phone (415) 843-4658.

The Department of Economics at the University of Manitoba (Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2, Canada) has announced that it will hold "An international conference on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the death of Karl Marx" [March 13, 1883], on the significance of Marx's thought, its interpretations and applications, in the last two decades of the twentieth century, to take place at the University of Manitoba, March 12-15, 1983. The organizing committee is soliciting papers addressing the conference theme "in terms of capitalist, state socialist, and Third World experience and prospects." Inquiries should be sent to The Karl Marx Centenary Conference at the above address.

It is a pleasure to note that Jim Petras, a frequent MR writer (of both articles and books) has been the recipient of a Page One Award for Crusading Journalism, sponsored by the Newspaper Guild of New York, for his article "Invented Red Menace: White Paper on the White Paper" (*The Nation*, March 28, 1981), described by the awarding judges as "a courageous article, seriously questioning the administration's justification for a deeper involvement in El Salvador through the use of a specious rendering of information."

We receive many more manuscripts than we have space to publish in MR, and as a result we all too often have to return articles or reviews which would be acceptable on the basis of quality. Those that are too long (more than 5,000 words for articles or 3,000 words for reviews) are always candidates for rejection, though we do make exceptions, and sometimes we ask authors to consider submitting shorter versions. And frequently we suggest other possible places of publication. In this connection, we would like to call attention to a journal which is probably not as widely known as it should be, *Economic Forum*, a journal edited by members of the Economics Department at the University of Utah (Salt Lake City, Utah, 84112). The purpose of the *Forum* is to provide an outlet for ideas in what the editors call "critical political economy." Elaborating on this theme, they say: "The *Forum* publishes articles that provide radical analyses as well as criticisms of orthodox approaches to the contemporary problems of inflation, unemployment, health care, social welfare, urban decay, and the role of the state. The *Forum* is also interested in exploring radical approaches to the traditional fields of economic history, history of economic thought, comparative systems, and economic development." They add, "We need your financial support. We invite you to subscribe and urge you to ask your library to subscribe." Annual rates are: students--$5; regular $8; and library $15.

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